

# ***The Beat Within***

***A Weekly Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside***



**Volume 9.18**



**Art By Michael Orozco**





# Editor's Note

**H**ere we are, just when you thought we at The Beat Within couldn't produce yet another packed issue of the most hardcore and real writings this side of the Mississippi! No, really, somedays we even shock ourselves with how impressive this operation is — the workshops, the typing, the editing, the laying out, and the reading of this very important weekly come together so smoothly, even under rough conditions. We hate to sound arrogant, but with what transpires here on the daily it even shocks us to see that we can actually create such an important document. It makes us think that no one can stop us!

It seems like yesterday we were a couple of years old, jumping on the MUNI every evening, if not BART, to get to our daily workshops, primarily at San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center, with a few classes in Alameda County. The work was hard back then, too. But, here we are today, a load of workshops later, twenty-plus colleagues later, hundreds and hundred of letters later. You know, we've lost track of the number of workshops we do given that we have opened our doors to so many institutions. The truth is we feel we are capable of opening even more doors for this program; the problem is we can no longer oversee the process. We can collaborate and help start the workshops. We can conduct a trainer and lead the initial workshops, but we can no longer make it a part of our day-to-day job to go to the workshops every week in the hall. We can barely do the programs we have on our plate today. It would be such a thrill to see more juveniles take our program down the same road as Maricopa County in Arizona. Maricopa County has used our Beat model and our topics to challenge their young people to write, but who conducts the workshops? It's the counselors! Yes, invested counselors! Once they get the writings from the workshops, they send them to us, via email or snail mail.

Nevertheless, here we are, it's mid 2004, and the economy is as tight as ever. And as powerful as our program is, we are not pulling in the money the way we should. We are now being put in the position of having to cut back some in order to survive this tight period while we full-time workers need to step up and help with visibility and bringing in new contacts, etc.

What does visibility mean? Well, it means us doing more outreaches, from schoolhouses to community and political forums and the foundation world, to name a few. Yeah, it's getting our name out there. It's getting more involved in juvenile justice reform. It's challenging, which we've been doing, the California Youth Authority's many correctional institutions to close its doors, to shake up its present model. It's not so much to take a specific stand, but to share the successful model we have created over the years, 'cause what better community teachers are there? We touch lives. We listen. We give those colleagues who were once in the system the opportunity to give back by enabling them to go back to various juvenile halls to conduct workshops. We give hope to our many young and old writers, and enable them to discover that they are something other than the stereotypes that are so quickly placed on them by the criminal justice system.

Speaking of writers who are "someone," of the fifteen voices in The Beat Without this week, eight of them were once young writers in our weekly workshops. Some, unfortunately, are writing us from the next leg of their incarceration ride, while a few of them are actually composing pieces from the computers in our office here on Ninth Street. The other half of this week's BWO writers have found out about The Beat from their cellies, from other Beat writers, or simply from stumbling upon the publication in their dorm, yard, pod, whatever it may be called.

A couple of cool things: In early June, The Beat Within is sending a contingent of four young colleagues — all of whom were once Beat writers in the Hall — to Missouri to tour their juvenile correctional facilities (their CYA) to learn more about that state's model, which focuses on treatment and rehabilitation, and which has successfully downsized the numbers of incarcerated youth tremendously.

Plus, in a couple of days, two of us are going to New York City after being invited by the Youth Justice Funding Collaboration — who does support our work — for a two-day conference to share, show and learn from other grantees. Sure, it will be great to be a part of this, plus, it'll be great to simply visit the very cool New York City. Of course we'll get back at you with updates, and hopefully, good memories.

Moving right along, you readers of this ed note, who happen to be participants in our writing workshops, need to step up as leaders! That's right, we're asking a lot, we need your help making our weekly program run a bit more smoothly and respectfully. Sure, we can yell, fuss, speak passionately about the work and/or get in F/U matches, but

that takes up too much energy, especially the negative part. We simply want you guys who believe in this program to help lead the workshops. Our challenge to you leaders is to help set the tone so every participant can get something out of our one hour-plus program. We're invested in you, so show your peers how invested you are in your writing and in a program that can help make a difference.

OK, the first topic addressed in our workshop was: "What Does The System Owe You? — We read many negative pieces about 'the system' in The Beat Within: The system is playing me! The system is not fair. The system hurts youngsters. The system is racist. The system makes money off us. The system is corrupt."

Even if every one of these criticisms is true, we wonder what you think 'the system' owes you. If 'the system' is the government, then what does the government owe you? Do schools (and teachers) owe you something? What? Do police officers, POs, judges, public defenders, DAs owe you anything? What? Is your family part of "the system"? If so, what do they owe you?

We're not sure how you define 'the system,' but whatever it means to you, what does 'the system' owe you?

The second topic was: "The Phone Call — When you got locked up, who was the first person you called? Why? Was it your mom? Dad? Girlfriend/boyfriend? What did you tell them? What words did you use to explain your situation?"

Did you lie? Did you tell the truth of what really happened or what you really did? Was it easy to tell the truth or lie? If you lied, tell us why you lied.

When you're incarcerated, who do you call while having your recreational time? What makes you want to call that person? Why?"

The last topic, in tribute to our Santa Clara writers who can only write on the topics we present, the open ended, "I feel . . ."

The writing in this issue is not bad at all. Read on!

Hey, as has been the tradition since the beginning of the publication, let us recognize our POW (Piece of The Week) writers! Congratulations to eight writers from San Mateo: Broken Glass, Juice, Ashley, Ginger, Lil' J, Jordan, Eriberto, and Korupt; three writers from Marin: Tim, Conrad, and Jason; thirteen writers from the 150 Crew: Toni, Sarkastix, Pastor J-Wizzle, Donta, Dolla Deesa, Abbas, Leon, Lil' Ray, Timothy, Brixx, Tishay, and Lil' Febo-Twilight Ridin' Hood; and one writer from San Francisco's YGC: Ridin' Hood, and one writer from Maricopa, Arizona: Whitney.

OK, attention contest writers, we have our tenth editor's-note writing contest to consider. We do hope some of you young pencil smugglers, and all for you thoughtful writers who like to express yourselves in our pages will consider the following question: We want to know what your all-time favorite movie is and why. We are curious about why this movie moves you so much. Tell us how it relates to you. Tell the readers about a time, maybe the first time, you saw the movie. We want the inviting details explaining why this movie will always have an important place on your movie shelf/heart. Be creative when painting the picture of this special, special movie.

With this said, the deadline for submissions is July 31, 2004. We will award four prizes/money orders for our favorite pieces. Our top prize is a \$100 money order for first place. Followed by a \$50 money order for second place, and for third and fourth place, \$25 money orders. With this said, good luck attempting to create a moving and telling piece about your all-time favorite movie. We encourage all of you editor's note readers to take this topic on! Now take us to the movies!

Before we cut this note, some of you readers have asked us, while others are probably just wondering, why we don't take a stand on some of the very critical world issues that are in our face every day, like the Berg beheading, or the American soldiers brutalizing Iraqi prisoners, the war in Iraq, or even the upcoming presidential election. Well, we, too, are overwhelmed by what we see and read. Of course we, too, have opinions, and we're sure many of you readers who don't have access to the news could either care less, or are dying to find out more. Well, let's just say we leave the opinions to you. We'll simply say that times are ugly. We're afraid of the way the world is heading, but this isn't a paper for us to take a stand in, The Beat Within is about you, and since 1996, writers and artists have been given this important outlet. Remember, The Beat Within is writing and art from inside juvenile hall and beyond. It's not about this editor saying one thing or the other about the system. We'll speak when necessary. You speak, we'll publish, we'll listen and we'll even question.

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At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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[www.thebeatwithin.org](http://www.thebeatwithin.org)

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## DON'T PUSH ME

I'm so close to the edge  
Don't push me  
I'm one step from the ledge  
I've got an army of haters  
Trying to push me off the cliff  
And a land full of judges  
Telling me I took advantage  
Of God's gift  
But even they are trying to push me off the cliff  
Pushing me  
Into a pit in hell  
Ripping apart my heart  
And putting my body up for sell  
I'm screaming out for help  
Someone, anyone  
Don't let them kill me  
My life has just begun  
They hear me crying  
And no one cares I'm dying  
Everyone turns away  
Acts like it's just another day  
It's all up to me now  
I start swinging and throwing 'bows  
I have a soul  
But no one knows  
So I keep pushing elbows  
"Let me go, let me go"  
There's great things I'm supposed to do  
Someone I'm supposed to be  
Through all my destruction  
It's hard to see  
But there's a light inside of me  
I give up  
No one understands  
No one lends out a hand  
I fall back and tumble to my doom  
Staff opens my doors  
I realize I'm in my room  
Judgment day is coming soon . . .

### -Broken Glass, San Mateo

*From The Beat: We can't imagine the anxiety you face as your release date nears — on one hand we know you're excited to touch down, but you also realize that it's not the end of the challenges you'll face. What we hope you realize is that it's the same resilience, determination, and self-knowledge that has been so crucial to your ability to make it through the Hall, even learn about yourself while here, that will be key to you thriving on the outs as well. That there's a light inside of you is impossible to ignore; whether you choose to nurture that light so that it can guide you is up to you. The haters won't go away when you get out — they'll assume different forms, and get at you all sorts of ways — and you will trip and stumble along the path. Will you have the heart to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and continue on, or will you run to the old habits for a false sense of security? We don't know about the someone that you're supposed to be, only about the young woman that you are — someone who has the tools to continue to grow and thrive.*



## Opportunity, Integrity, A Chance To Be Free

What does the system owe me?  
Opportunity, integrity, a chance to be free,  
a chance to raise my child in a good environment.  
The system owes me support and help.  
A chance to live and not die.  
A chance to ask and a chance to reply.  
A chance to answer when you ask me the same questions  
every time I'm seen.  
A chance to live life without the system to spy.  
A chance to go places without the question of who, what,  
where, when and why.  
I want to be respected because I am not a child,  
but not yet grown  
and since I'm in your system you owe me a decent home.  
The system owes me a chance to be alone  
and a chance to roam,  
But the truth is the system owes me some money  
so that I can move on.  
The system owes me encouragement  
and love and since I been with you since birth,  
we go together like hand and glove.  
Treat me like what I am, another one of your children among  
many.  
I'm yours and you are mine.  
Treat me, don't trick me  
'cause I'm your best bottle of fine wine  
so place me on the back burner,  
but remember, you'll need me when it's time to dine.  
Place me in front and not the back,  
because believe when I say I deserve and earn to be on top of  
the sack.

### -Ridin' Hood GU, SF/YGC

*From The Beat: Excellent writing. We especially like that you're not just asking for cash or things, but for the way you'd like to be treated. If you're not going to get all of what you want from the system, what can you do to get some of it yourself?*

**Treat me like what  
I am, another one  
of your children  
among many.**





## MY REGULAR DAY IN THE HALL

I get up around 6:30 to go take my med  
I take the pill without water, so it won't go to my head  
I go to my room to go back to sleep  
If I can't, I try to count sheep  
Suddenly I wake up again to the counselor's call  
"Get up," it's wake up time in the Hall  
They tell us to get up and make our beds "open air"  
I listen to them, but I really don't care  
They open my door so I can go get my wash up bag  
Since it's my only time out before breakfast, I lag  
I go back in my room, brush my teeth,  
comb my hair, wash my face  
I look at my reflection on the window  
and call myself a disgrace  
Then I sit in bed to think and reminisce  
About the times before it came to this  
Getting up when I want to, eating what I wanna eat  
Putting on clean clothes, my own shoes on my feet  
Going to school, kicking it with my friends everyday  
But I messed up; I chose the wrong way  
Look at me now, my whole mind's full of sorrow  
Sometimes I even hope I won't see tomorrow  
"Breakfast time, get up from your bed  
Line up in the Hallway talking is dead"  
We stand by a table and pray for our meal  
I still don't know why we pray for it; that's how I feel  
While we eat, they give us good advice  
Bout how life isn't free; it has a price  
When we're done, we line up for school  
While we wait the staff will cap on a fool  
After our first two classes we come back for a break  
Somebody'll talk mess out the door,  
but we all know he's fake  
Then we go back for another two classes  
Since it's boring we make fun of the teacher's glasses  
We do that until we have to eat again  
We eat our lunch fast so we can go to the gym  
We're late to the gym so we hurry up to get in line  
It happens a lot, we never get there on time  
I stay in my room, kick back and read  
I do it for fun, plus to exceed  
Once school is over, the class will come back  
We'll get our last head call and a fruit as a snack  
We can't come out our rooms 'cause it's shift change  
Day staff comes in and shifts they interchange  
During that time I sit down to think  
About how sittin' in here really stinks  
Since it's summer it be getting' hotter  
When I be in my room, I be fiendin' for water  
We get ready to shower,  
throw out our shorts and underwear  
While you're in the shower, don't talk, pray or swear  
When we're done with showers, we get ready to dine  
A hot dog and some beans, that's just divine  
We finish our food as if it was a snack  
When we're done, to our rooms we go back  
We have to wait an hour until rec  
During that time I take a rain check  
When I was at home  
all I did was drink beer and smoke weed  
I never tried crystal meth or E

Never did crack, cocaine or LSD  
Never tried heroin or tried PCP  
But I never listened to my parents, broke all their rules  
I didn't care about them, thought they were fools  
But now I look at myself and I was the fool  
Mistreating my parents, that shhh wasn't cool  
I wish I could go back and do it all over again  
But I can only do it with paper and a pen  
These two materials help me escape from this world  
Escape things like from anxiety to war  
I can be at a beach with a girl by my side  
Or I can be at Six Flags on a roller coaster ride  
But when the staff opens my door,  
I snap back to reality  
I come back to being the same person, same nationality  
I love being Mexican, love being brown  
But I hate my sadness, hate my frown  
It's time for showers, knock 'em out quick  
And hold your soap tight, don't let it slip"  
We finish our showers and go straight to dinner  
Don't get that much food, I already feel thinner  
We got fifteen minutes, then we go back to our room  
People start hitting the door,  
all you hear is boom, boom!  
Quit the noise or y'all won't come out at all  
If you wanna come out,  
you better check them punks in the Hall  
It annoys the hell out of me  
when people beat on the doors  
Also the people who yell out their room  
while laying down on the floors  
For awhile they make hella noise, get hella loud  
Then they be quiet 'cause they wanna come out  
Then we come out for rec, an hour max  
We watch a movie, kick back and relax  
The people who got an hour get hella mad  
Bt it was their fault, they chose to be bad  
We'll see some movies we haven't seen before  
That's 'cause they're bootlegs, we've seen about four  
When the movie is over, I go back to my cell  
I hate going back in it; it feels like going back to hell  
Again people bang on their doors and yell obscenities  
Others yell that they're going to fight making a scenery  
I try to ignore them and sometimes it works  
Sometimes I say who ever they are  
they are worser than jerks  
In reality I call them much worser things  
that I can't write in here  
They're way too disrespectful, much more severe  
If I asked politely to stop they wouldn't listen  
That's just the way it goes when you're in the system  
That's a regular day in here, that's how it goes  
It'll always be like that  
'cause places like these never close  
Oh, it's 10 O'clock 'cause they just turned off my light  
It's too dark to write, so until next time, goodnight

**-Toni, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: Excellent writing Toni. Once again you blow our minds! Of all this, what's the worst part about being in Juvenile Hall? By your words, it seems like there's not a lot to learn in the Hall. What do you think should be done so that Juvenile Hall can be more of a learning and growing experience? What can you do so that you can get more out of being in the Hall? We wish you the best of luck with getting out of the Hall and we hope that you will find happiness someday.**

**I love being Mexican, love being brown  
But I hate my sadness, hate my frown**



## Straight From The Heart

What's up y'all? For a while I got into writing about what you shouldn't do and what you should do. I'm a try to switch lanes and get on myself instead of you. I can go on and on about why you should do the right thing and trying to give you advice but if I don't follow my own advice it means nothing.

A lot of people out there have problems, myself included. Most of us that write to The Beat have experienced some pretty depressing moments in our childhoods. Some of us found out that one of the best ways to deal with that emotional pain is by writing. Unfortunately, we found out too late. Look at where we're at.

Most of us sooner or later have or will write about our pasts. I don't blame you, I actually encourage you to find a friend that you can really trust, not just one of your homies, and talk to him or her. Build up a relationship with this person and get to know each other, that way you can both be able to talk about your past and present problems and be able to help each other out but for now your best friends should be that pencil and paper.

Personally, it helps me get things off my chest since I don't have anybody to trust in here. I never thought it would really help me until I started to write for The Beat this time I came here.

I suggest you find something constructive to do during the time you just sit in your room and do nothing. Some people say they do exercise and workout, I do that every now and then. I recommend it sometimes.

## EARLY CONFESSIONS

You never heard this  
And I never said it to you  
Who are you?  
Why do I cry for you?  
What makes you so important?  
What's the big deal?  
I don't even know if I like you  
I never even met you  
Let alone talk to you  
But somehow  
Deep down in my heart  
I know who you are  
And I like what I see  
Someone warm  
Caring, energetic, full of love  
The light that's always on  
Even through the harshest of storms  
My hero and inspiration  
Big bro's main motivation  
And mom's pride and joy  
So I don't know anymore  
What to say  
But I think you should hear this  
It's already too late  
I should have never waited  
But better late than never  
Lil' cousin,  
Love you.

-Sarkastix, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Wow! Sarkastix, this piece really took us into your thoughts. How can you have so many feelings about someone you never met? You don't even know if you care about this person. But actually you do. Why is that? Is this because a family bond, same blood? What is it about connections we can have with people, that we don't even know or never met? Share with us some more of your wisdom. What do you make of all this?

I also  
strongly  
suggest  
that you  
read as

## VIRUS OF THE HEART

This, that I feel  
Is like a sickness  
A virus eating away  
Deteriorating my soul  
I'm no longer whole  
But two selfish people  
One side wanting you for myself  
You're loving and caring family  
I know your trying  
But come back  
Please comeback  
We need you here  
We love you here  
We are nothing now  
I am nothing  
You made me feel little  
'Cause I always thought of you  
As such a big person  
Why did you shrink? And go the other way  
Turn around  
You hear that voice  
That's me calling you  
Come back  
I need you here

-Sarkastix, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Man, Sarkastix you're a good writer. Sometimes it's hard to follow exactly what you're talking about. But, we think that it makes for the strongest writing. Your words really show us struggles that you are going through. We continue to feel you, and look forward to reading you're pieces week after week.

well. I like to read a lot myself when I can't or don't want to write. Reading helps you use your imagination and it helps you expand your vocabulary and knowledge. Those are the things that help me out while I'm in my room.

I would really like for you to really consider to use some of these things instead of banging on the walls, doors, and windows or talking and yelling out their doors. It really frustrates me when I'm writing or reading because I can't concentrate on what I'm trying to do.

I restrain myself from acting up and doing things like that. It's called self-discipline, being able to handle yourself during tough times. Don't get me wrong there are times where I will go over board a little but not that much. I am able to stop myself before my temper escalates to a high level where I lose control.

Sometimes it has gone all the way, but that was in the past. Now I'll just cuss for a minute or two, but that's about it. I'm just trying to help you guys out. Find something positive to do that you like and makes you feel good and stick to it. Do it before you end up some place you don't want to be in.

Also when somebody makes you mad — don't act up. What I like to do is just smile at them because it angers them and they want to see you mad. So they will try even harder and talk more and sooner or later the staff will find out and they will get in trouble. But if you really can't handle yourself just go to your room or get away from that person if you can't go to your room.

The important thing is not to respond in a negative way. Nobody is perfect in this world and more than likely nobody ever will be. So if you can't do something on the first try, just try again. One thing you should always remember is, "Be the best you can be"

-Toni, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You offer a lot of tactics that are helpful in times when a person ain't got nothin' but time. Why do you think that people bang on the walls and doors? When you want attention, how do you get it? Do you feel that you are always at your best? How would you go about teaching someone to exercise these things you speak about?

We are  
nothing  
now  
I am  
nothing



## SPECIAL RIGHTS

Do people in this country, other than the ones with political power, have special rights? I'm not talking about handicaps, senior citizens, or people with disabilities. Who else gets special rights? Not us, that's for damn sure. I'm talking about cops. What makes them so special, other than their jobs, which, by the way, is to serve and protect? Is it that they enforce the law? Heck no! Listen to what's been floating in my thoughts for the last few days.

Now, I'd like someone to give me one good reason why cops should be allowed to be exempt from crimes they've committed while on the job. Now there's a few examples to back up what I'm saying, and I'm sure that everyone who reads this can think of at least one other example.

First off, I'd like to take time to talk about the small things. For example: 80 mph on the highway with no lights — I mean sirens — while doing a transport. A lot of them for some reason don't know what a turn signal is. A lot of cops I see like to use the infamous "California Stop," where you don't come to a complete stop at a stop sign, and in a few experiences I've had, they don't read me my rights. Is it that they get special privileges on the job? Correct me if I'm wrong, but I've always been under the impression that cops are supposed to abide by the law, not purposely break it. If a cop is speeding without a reasonable cause, shouldn't he get a ticket and be sent to traffic school? Aren't all people in the car supposed to wear seat belts? I'm not, when I'm in the back of one of their cars. Isn't that considered "illegal"? Someone please tell me if I'm wrong.

Now let's move on to the larger things: things that any other person in the USA would go to jail, prison, or be sentenced to Life on Death Row for, until the magical day comes where you go see the doctor, for a healthy injection of death! Cops must think they're pretty hot stuff if they can do some things that'll ruin your life or even stop at that very moment when they bust a cap in your "butt," saying

it nicely. I heard a few years back that somewhere in LA, two officers confronted a man in front of his house and for some reason asked him for an ID. The man reached into his back pocket, grabbed his wallet, and as soon as he began to bring it in front of him to show the cops, he was shot, at least twice, and killed! You know why? The cops or "peace officers" thought he was pulling out a gun! Bullshhh! What makes it worse is that he was black and the officers were white. Is that not a hate crime? It's racism; I know that! Murder? Yeah. Nothing happened to the cops.

Also, what gives them the right to hit us with clubs, nightsticks, pepper spray us and most of all, point at and shoot us with guns! If we're not doing what they ask, why do they get to shoot us with beanbags and rubber bullets? Excuse me, but wouldn't that be assault with a deadly weapon? I can understand if we have a gun and we're shooting at them, but can't they find a better way?

Another thing is that I was talking to this one cat and he told me that his back pockets were empty after the cop searched him, but when he sat in the cop car he felt something in his back pocket. He was able to put his hand in there and found crystal meth, which he doesn't use, so unless it just magically appeared, I think that there are some real crooked cops out there.

You guys know what I'm talking about! Also, I bet this would make a good Beat Within topic, 'cause I bet more people than just me have something to say about it! Peace and God Bless!

-Tim, Marin

**From The Beat:** The discrepancy between how regular people and cops get to act within the legal system would be a great Beat Within topic! Thanks for the idea! The black man who was shot reaching for his wallet by four white cops happened in New York, not LA, but you got the idea, Tim. You're right, the cops were exonerated. Did you see the tape of Rodney King getting beaten by the police? There were riots in LA for days. People were killed and property burned and destroyed. What do you think should happen to "dirty cops" who plant drugs, take drug dealers' cash and drugs, and shoot innocent people? If you were a judge in such a case, how would you handle it?

## To Whom It May Concern

Dear Beat Within:

This is a letter to whom may understand where I am coming from. Me as a sixteen-year-old sitting in a room with four white walls as a resident from Redwood City facing three years and eight months in the Y.

Hey, homie, you guys know it wasn't me. But on May 5, 2004, I went to court. They sent two for 270 days, and one to camp, and they trying to send me to the Y. Why me?

I'm not ready for a battlefield. They pumping they chest, hitting it, making hand signs to keep my head up. Yeah, I am down as a homeboy now 'cause I'm going to the Y.

Respect, man? For what? Because I fought for my rag to earn my dots for my 'hood to stay up? Or did I get respect 'cause they trying to send me to YA?

Answer me, homies. What respect should I show you? You never did crap for me. When I was down, who picked me up? When I got stabbed, who healed my hand? Me, not you. You never stretched out your hand for me.

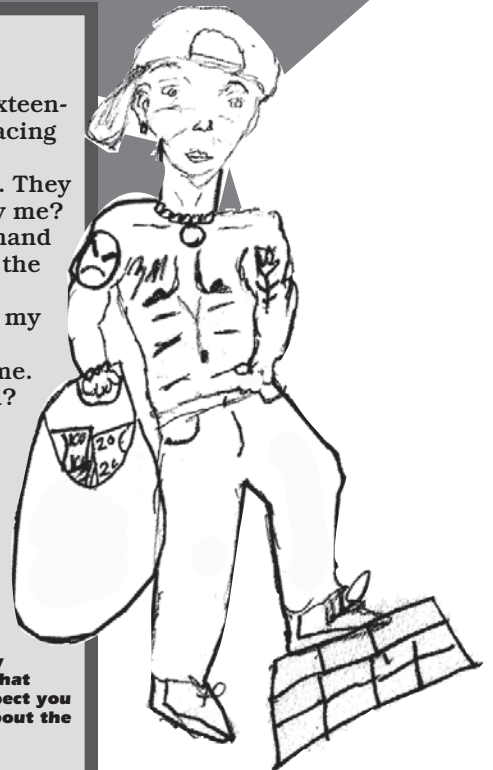
You respect me, man? Drop that respect 'cause I am on my way to CYA.

I will always remember those words you said to me; they will stay in my heart. I think of those words you told me homes: "Don't trip, Homeboy. It's all coo'. I will take it."

Damn, man. Look at what happened now. Much love to you, Homes.

-Juice, San Mateo

**From The Beat:** This is a deep piece, Juice — you take on something that so many feel and so few are willing to talk about. We often receive pieces from Beat Without writers who talk about how their so-called homeboys have deserted them; they write to try to teach you that those "down for life" homies are often the first to disappear. How could they show you respect? Is there anything they could do that would demonstrate that they're really there for you? Can you seek respect in ways that are more deep, meaningful, and lasting than the "respect" you've received from your homies? We respect you for dropping this piece, Juice — it shows a young man coming to know himself and think critically about the situation he's in.







## *Dedications To Those Who Mean a Lot*

What's up with the things that we get ourselves into these days? It's like we don't even care about the things we do!

Well, I for one really need to get the freak out of this place. And if I get out anytime soon, I am going to stay out this time — because I have a little one on the way! And I have a niece and a nephew to look after now. So this will make me change everything that I think about as a result of the things I live for now!

So now that I have the motivation to make my life go a lot smoother than it did before, please don't try to stop me. Everything that I want, I intend to get. And every obstacle will only make me try harder to succeed in life and to become a better person to all those who surround me in my life.

Before I came to Camp, I used to think that I wasn't going to make it anywhere. But here at Camp, I became inspired to write about my life and my emotions — all these pent-up feelings I've been feeling for these past few years of my life!

There have been many times when I just wanted to blow up and say, "Forget it, man! I am out of here!" But opposing my self-destructive impulses, were a few people that I hold close to me; and they helped me stop running from my problems. They also helped me solve a lot of my problems without adding other extra, unnecessary, time-consuming problems to the ones I already have.

Then there was this girl that started to write to me, and her name was Crystal. She's been with me for three years now, and we have a kid on the way. She is about two-and-a-half months pregnant. But she is two years older than me, and she's ready to be a mother. And when I get out and turn eighteen, we are going to get married, because that is how much I love her.

Anyway, I would tell y'all everything about my personal life right now, but I can't because it wouldn't feel right if I did that without my girl here with me. But I will say that I love her so much that I would do anything for her that she asked of me right now. When I get out, I am going to go so wild with her! We are going to make real long, passionate love all night through.

Now this piece here in *The Beat Within*, is dedicated to my mom. She has been through thick and thin for me. She was there when no one else was. She took care of me when my daddy died; and she fed me, even when she used to do drugs a long time ago.

When I was just a little kid, she taught me never to hit a girl. And she told me always to express my feelings. Anything that I was thinking, she told me to let it out — and now I am! So I will ask you to bear with me through the pain and the agony that I have experienced in my life, but I will not ask for your sympathy. I am not writing this for sympathy, but simply because this stuff got me going crazy!

Dear Momma: I been going through some thangs, baby! But I got love for ya if ya still act crazy! Dear Momma: I been going through some thangs, baby! But I got love for ya if ya still act crazy! — Now this is how I feel about my momma. How do you feel about yours? Dear Momma: I been going through some thangs, baby! But I got love for ya if ya still act crazy!

When I was down, she brought me back up to her level. She brought me happiness. And we used to be so tight that couldn't nothing come between us, until about five years ago. That's when I moved away from my block.

But about four years ago was when I started messin' up

and doin' a whole lot of trash that I should not have been doing at that time. But I was, so I was punished for it — and it hurt a lot! So that is mainly the reason why I have been through a lot of stuff these past few years of my life.

Let me put it like this: I am only seventeen years old, and I could write a book about my life already! And that would only be the beginning chapters of my life story.

But I just wanna let my momma know that I respect her for every punishment that she gave. And I can say that I am grateful for it, now that I think about it, because coming to jail has taught me a lot about myself that I think about everyday now. So I want to say: Thank you, Momma, for everything!

Lil' Mama, this one is going out to you; this piece is dedicated to you as well! You have been there for me also. I probably wouldn't have known what to do over these past three years if you hadn't been there to help me with some of my problems. This is my wife, or will be. To all those who want to know, we will soon be married! I love her with everything that I have!

She's given me a lot of things and I have done the same for her. We are there for each other, and I think that's what real love is all about. That's my opinion! Anyway, she is now my baby'momma, and this is the first of many babies we will have together. Of course, we have had our share of problems together, but, fortunately, we made it through — together!

This girl is very special and dear to my heart, but I just be doin' scandalous dirt to her — done cheated on her too many times. But I told her what I have done, and she is still with me to this day. And I love her for that! Because without her, I don't know where I'd be right now — maybe locked up in a state prison, or dead!

I really love her. This is my baby for life. And now I know — I don't need no other but her and me. Together till the end! I love you, baby, forever!

And now this dedication is for you, lil' brother. Yeah, this one's for you, bra bra! We always been thuggin' it till the end, just me and you. We are the last ones left from our old crew. So I don't care about nothing else but me and you, together like we always do. Now you ain't been with me for a while, so I don't do nothin' without you. But when you get out, we gonna kick it real tuff! Man, lil' bra, I miss you, dog. We closer than a mug, and I haven't seen you in a couple of months.

I know you're out there stressing, because it's hard. But what I need you to do, is stick it out — and don't do nothing stupid! You know where you're going if you do, and I don't want you to end up just like me. If you do, I'm going let you know how I feel about it! And it ain't good! 'Cause you know how many years they are trying to give you. So don't — do — nothing — stupid! This is it for now, lil' brother. Love ya fo' life, lil' brother, from Lil' Jepeabo.

**-Pastor J-Wizzle, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We can feel the intensity of your love in your dedications to these three individuals, all crucial players in the story of your heart's survival. And we can also feel the intensity of the dramas you've been through with all three of these individuals — plus the necessity of sorting out your feelings about what you used to do, and maybe some of what they did, too. With your mother, it's clear that at least from your point of view, all is forgiven, and you love your mother, no matter how she's feeling. And with your betrothed, it sounds like it's all on you to show you can be the man you want your child to know as a loving husband and responsible father. Lastly, there's your little brother, to whom you give some sage advice about how to handle this adversity in his life. But when you're both out and free, you both need to be behaving very differently from who you used to be! Sure, you can kick it and chill, and celebrate how you feel about each other. But don't try to revive a defunct crew with your little brother and you — or your happiness and freedom will be over way too soon! Thanks for this testimony of your heart's core, but we'd still like to hear more stories when you're ready to impart them, plus more of the wisdom that now lifts you higher than ever before.





## Keep Me In Your Heart

"No, no, no, this can't be true, I must be dreaming! Hh God, please say I'm dreaming!" One phone call changed my life, made my world seem to freeze around me and made me fall into such a deep state of denial that even my tears felt reluctant to fall.

My family and I were happily celebrating at my brother's homecoming party. He had just been released from Camp Glenwood earlier that day, and we wanted things to go smoothly for at least one day. No fighting and arguing. We all maintained high spirits but not for long.

"Hello! Is anyone going to get the phone?" I yelled from outside for someone to pick up the phone that was inside when my brother's girlfriend walked outside, phone in hand, looking pale as a ghost. The conversation was short, blunt, and without answers. Danielle (my brother's girlfriend) hung up the phone and hesitated to console our anticipation. Her voice, cold and shaky, said, "That was Athena. Tommy's in the hospital . . . he's been shot . . . in the head!"

That's when the shock hits, and then the but whys and what ifs come in, then the rage and anger sets in, and all you can think about is revenge! Then it's denial, you can't get over the fact that someone you love so much is gone forever and you really won't see them anymore. One of the final stages is sadness and grieving — that's where I still am today.

Dear Tommy,

Today I have the opportunity to write to you and tell you all the things I've always wanted to say. So I'm going to. I, among hundreds of others, love you more than words can say. And not a day goes by without your presence being dearly missed. I want to thank you for all the wonderful times we shared together. And apologize for my absence while being locked up or in my own world on drugs, when you could have used a hug . . .

Your dear brother Michael has suffered the most and unfortunately will not quite reach out for help — at least not from me, that is. He's still with Athena and I pray for his health and happiness.

You are a very special person to me Tommy and I hope you know that. Please stay by my side and watch over me, you know I need it. And don't forget about me punk, because I'll be expecting you to welcome me with open arms when I come up there.

I love you.

**-Ashley, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: We assume that Tommy was the brother whose return you and your family were all set to celebrate, though you don't quite spell it out for us. In any case, the situation you describe is almost unspeakably tragic. There is something especially touching about the way you wrote this — one part a description of what happened, and an abrupt shift to a letter directly to Tommy. Has Tommy's death changed the way you feel about yourself? Is there a way to live your life strengthened by the thought of doing all that he didn't live to do? The grieving process will continue; can you gain comfort from his memory as you face the challenges that are ahead of you?*

**Two wrongs don't make a right,  
so if you mess up and get on probation  
turn around and try and do the right  
thing and take advantage of the  
system's resources.**

## My Twin Brother, Jeremy

Jeremy is my identical twin brother. We can feel what each other are feeling. He and me have had a lot of good times together and I remember him saving my life in a swimming pool when I was drowning.

My brother and I were four or five years old and went swimming at our friend John's, house, one day. Our mother forgot our bathing suits, so she went home to get them. It took about twenty minutes. Jeremy and I waited five minutes, and then went into the shallow end of our friend's pool in our sweatpants. Then I fell in the deep end. Jeremy got a basketball that floats, jumped in the deep end and pulled me out.

Then another day, when we were five, my brother was playing with matches on his bed in our bedroom. I was in the living room playing video games. He lit the bedroom on fire. I smelled smoke, so I went to look in the kitchen and nothing was burning, so I went in the bedroom and Jeremy was huddled in the corner with plastic burning his arm. I picked him up, and put him over my back and ran out of the room, and went to tell our mom and the firemen came. So I returned the favor.

**-Jason, Marin**

*From The Beat: You're so lucky to have a twin. It's a shame that you can't be living together now. When you become free, can you go visit him? Maybe he needs you as much as you may need him. Can you help each other get through these hard times in Juvy? What are some of the greatest memories that you share with your twin?*

## Probation

Probation, probation, and more probation. It always feels like the system is out to get you and like it never ends. When I first got on probation a few years ago, I thought my life was over, and I felt like I was being smothered by rules and regulations. It only took me like five years to realize the system is out to help most people.

If you just do what you have to do there really isn't anything you have to worry about. Probation and Hillcrest aren't nothing nice really. But you don't have to get locked up just because you're on probation. Being on probation can really help you out with completing school, getting a job, financial aid, finding you a rehab, group home, or an independent living program, even help you get free counseling, therapy, or extra services — many things you can't receive without probation.

Like if I didn't get locked up last time I was here, I probably never would have completed high school by taking my GED, which I am very proud of seeing how it got me to enroll into Foothill, where I'll be going to for two years and transferring to a four-year college.

Probation has also made me look at the brighter side of life and to appreciate the small things. Everyone's so quick to judge someone or something or to hate on them. Life has lessons to be learned. Two wrongs don't make a right, so if you mess up and get on probation turn around and try and do the right thing and take advantage of the system's resources. In other words, life could be worse — you're not a starving kid in Africa.

**-Ashley, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: It's a breath of fresh air to read a piece by someone who views probation as a positive, rather than a negative, force in her life. It is unfortunate that many who are on probation don't have your attitude towards probation; however, many often feel their probation officers concentrate more on trying to catch them slipping than in helping. How did you come to your attitude about probation? How did you recognize what you needed to do to make probation work for you, instead of being something that brings you down? What would you say to those who have bad relationships with their POs?*



## My Last Time

This is my last time in Juvenile Hall. Finally, after four years, I have made it off probation and back in the game.

Even though this isn't a great place, it has been a part of me for a few years, so I will miss it. I have grown up so much in here, even I can see the change! Probation is always looked upon as bad, but it works. I'm very proud that I got through it. It has been the biggest challenge I've ever had to face. I've done it. By myself!

Some advice to amateurs: do your time and get out. Probation is no joke these days. Make it off probation before you're eighteen. Enjoy being a kid! I'm finally turning eighteen and I'm excited but famished that I couldn't enjoy ages thirteen to eighteen.

But now I can again be thrown an even bigger challenge: growing out of habits and getting my shhh together. I'm going to college next fall. I got a job waiting for me. That's a start.

Being incarcerated was a burden at first but it has turned out a blessing, a tremendous lesson.

Shout outs and my final goodbyes:

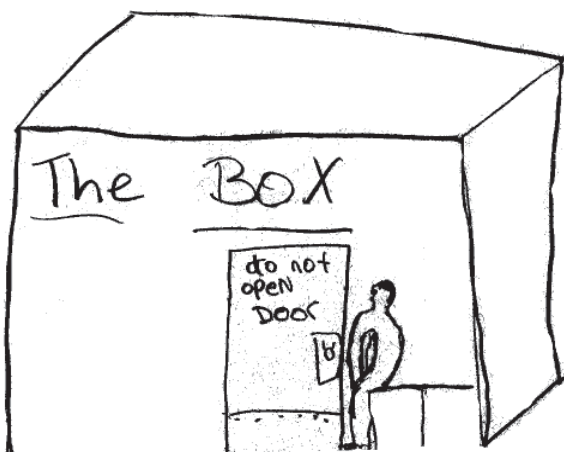
Thank you Ms. Switzer for always keeping our unit in line, for taking care of me when I needed you; Mr. Saaadat for being by far the best male staff Hillcrest could ever have, most of all caring for my needy ass; Ms. Knibbe for being a dear friend and the bestest in the whole entire world. Thanks for treating me as an equal. You're a beautiful person inside and out and I love you for that — I love all three of you for that.

Lastly I hope all you females realize one day what it takes to get out and to act right, even though sometimes we didn't get along. You try being here for so long and getting along with every girl that walks in here. I apologize! For all you males that I associated with, I hope you guys grow up and realize that you all have so much potential. I love each and every one of you. No not like that! Ha ha. Anyways keep your heads up. I'll write you all, much love and respect. God bless.

Beat: Thanks for all your respect. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to get my thoughts down on paper. I promise to keep in touch on the outs! Keep this wonderful program going. Until pen meets paper . . .

**-Ginger, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Wow — as with Ashley's piece, it's nice to read a piece in which someone gives credit where credit is due. What is it that enabled you to see probation as a tool you could use to set yourself straight? With everyone around you so quick to hate on probation and on counselors, how did you hold on to your view that some of what you've been through at Hillcrest has been good for you and enabled you to grow? If you could list the qualities that make for a good counselor, what would they be? Your words of advice to others caught up in the system are well spoken, but it'll be your actions that speak loudest. What will it take for you to make good on some of the potential that you possess? It's been a pleasure having you in our workshops for the past year or so — both your participation in conversation and your writing have made The Beat stronger. We look forward to hearing from you soon.*



## The Beat

## Within

**gave me an  
opportunity to  
express myself  
freely, made  
me look at  
certain things  
differently**

## Dear Beat Within

I wanted to let ya'll know I'm out on May 14th — my 18th birthday — and I'll finally be off probation! Everyone thinks I'm hella lucky but it ain't even like that.

I had to convince my parents just to let me come back home, until I save up the rest of the money I need to move out. Which means I'm already on thin ice at my house. And there won't be much time for parties and all that, seeing how I need to get a full time job so I can save for my place, pimp my '73 Nova out, and enroll into Foothill College as soon as possible.

I'm more than excited to get out, but I'm also trippin'. Man, I haven't been free in over five years. I don't have a probation officer checkin' on my ass anymore. And it's gonna be a struggle to just jump right back into the real world. You get so used to things while locked up that it becomes normal. But in reality this is far from normal.

There's so much waiting for me on the outs — unfortunately there's a lot more negative than positive. But I hope to change that. I have so many dreams and goals that I've put off for so long due to drugs, and drugs, and well . . . pretty much more drugs. That's kid shhh and I have too much to lose. I'm really not tryin' to do anymore time — I'm coo' off of moving up to the big league. I really am getting tired of learning things the hard way.

Anyways, I wanted to thank everyone working for The Beat Within. I think it's great what all of you are doing. Sometimes we're not as appreciative as we should be, 'cause y'all do a lot to keep our program going and I'm really grateful for that. The Beat Within gave me an opportunity to express myself freely, made me look at certain things differently, and gave me something to read when I was bored as hell in my room, so thank you. Special thanks to Matt and Merv for always coming out to Hillcrest School and keepin' it real. Also to Poetic Prisoner; keep your talent flowin' and good luck y'all on a coo' successful future. I'll be praying for everyone's health and happiness.

**-Ashley, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Off the top, thanks for the props. We provide the platform, but it's all on you for taking advantage of it. We don't envy the struggle you're facing as you return to the outs — the challenges are hard enough without dealing with a family that doesn't support you, plus enrolling in school, and your ride, and . . . How are you going to handle challenges as they come instead of being overwhelmed by all the possibilities? Who can you turn to for support when things are rough? We know that you mean it when you say it's "kid shhh," but how will you resist the temptations that you'll face to use again? The struggle certainly isn't over, and the times ahead won't all be sunny, but you have what it takes to make it through the rough waters.*





## Trying To Understand What A Woman Goes Through

Can you ever make me feel whole again?  
Can you ever stop this burning pain?  
Or am I just left to go insane?  
You whip me, now you got me tame  
You lit the match that started the flame  
You said your love for me would forever remain  
Now you say you don't feel the same  
For our destruction you get all the glory and the fame  
You were my God now you acting like a lame  
Ignoring my existence like you don't know my name  
Treating me like I'm the next dame  
You now remember tapping my windowpane  
But this whole time you've been playing a game  
You think you so fly but ninja you are just vain  
With yo' selfish loving ass, after ten minutes you done  
Your word has no bond, valued like a salt of grain  
A bullet to your heart I want to aim  
But I never succumb to the devil so I must refrain  
I listened only to my heart instead of including my brain  
So as my tears rain  
My inner strength gains  
Momentum to seek advice I went to him the most high  
He said, "don't cry."  
Let go and the blessings will flow, so peace  
This animosity must cease  
I let go of this grief  
You thief of my heart, you're right, we need to part  
Thank you for the passion,  
the fun, the looks of last,  
thanks for this last lesson on honesty, compassion  
and trust I will be okay, actually I know I'll do better  
I've seen the real and I know that you can't weather the storm  
I need above the norm, one who doesn't conform  
Or give in to the devil  
Always seeking an understanding of the next level  
So you've made room for my king  
My wedding ring and eventually my heart will sing  
I had to let this off my chest  
You presented a very hard test  
But I passed with flying colors  
So onto other lovers I know we're through  
I bid you oh adieu, by the way boo, I love you  
So to the woman in and out  
I understand, so come with your hand up.

**-Donta, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This is amazing work on how you empathize with what a woman goes through with a man that doesn't do her right. Have you ever been that man? Or have you been in the position of the woman and have been treated wrongly by a woman? How can you decrease the drama you have in your life and in your relationships? You are a talented thinker and writer. We encourage you to focus on finishing your program and furthering your education and aspirations. A good and lasting relationship will eventually happen when you love your freedom and self enough to stop the scandalous dealings.*

**I told them the truth  
and explained  
I messed up.**

## WHAT THE SYSTEM OWES ME

What do the system owe me?  
At least a couple hundred geez  
For them two times I got scraped by the PD  
They hate me but I ain't conspirin' against the police  
But shhh, they ain't gon' believe me,  
just choke and beat me up  
Repeatedly, like it's déjà vu  
so it's like what should I do?  
Got me caught up in a catch 22  
how can a youngsta stay coo'  
When they call task every time I pass the school  
Not knowing choices formed into what I had to do  
Doctor wanna know why my lungs is gettin' frostbite  
'Cause my heart done turned  
colder than Alaska at night  
From being proved wrong in court,  
but damn I was right  
Alright they must want me to cuss, spit and fight  
Think somebody gon' play like they did me shady  
With the baton in daylight and still play'd me  
I want justice for thousands and my homies  
Tell the truth,  
my whole city is what the system owe me

**-Dolla Deesa, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You unveil the hidden abuse that happens to many. You may have been doing something shady but does that give the police the right to overdo it? We encourage you to speak out against your rights being violated. Remember though that the only thing you can really change for sure is you. How can you reform you? Eventually how can you do your part to help reform the system and the community?*

**this whole time you've  
been playing a game  
You think you so fly but  
ninja you are just vain**

## Called Home First

When I got locked up, the first place I called was my house. I wanted to know what was the reaction of my family, and to let them know I'm OK.

When I called my house, my sister picked up the phone and as soon as she heard my voice she started crying. When she started crying I couldn't help it but to cry myself. The worst part was my sister and I weren't talking to each other because of some fight we had, and when I heard her cry it really broke my heart. She started to tell me how the police came to the house to search it, and my mom is really sad.

I told them the truth and explained I messed up. It was really hard for me to explain to them the crime I committed because I was shocked myself.

**-Abbas, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You have a good family. It was a very difficult thing to talk to your family but you did it and you did the right thing by being honest with them and with your feelings. Many people do things that surprise themselves. We can tell that you use this as an important life lesson and you have really taken it to heart, mind and soul to not repeat your mistake.*



## Leon's Story, Chapter 2

By the time Leon was seven years old, he was already known as a big troublemaker at school. Soon, he became known as a big troublemaker in the community.

Leon's parents had been on drugs since he was three. None of Leon's friends wanted to come to Leon's house because everybody knew his parents were always high. Leon did not like being at home when his parents were home. So, by the time Leon was six years old, he would wander around the neighborhood all night and all day.

Leon's parents did not do a whole lot, but they still understood that Leon was headed for trouble. They told Leon that he should stay at home more, especially at night. But Leon does not listen to them, or anybody else. Now Leon is seven, and he knows that everyone at school knows that Leon's mom and dad are on drugs.

One day, Leon was at school in his second-grade classroom, and he was sent to the office as usual. Leon expected to wait on the office bench, and then get sent back to class. However, he was sent into the principal's office right away, and the door quickly closed behind him.

Leon had never seen so many white people in his life. There was a police detective, a probation officer, two social workers, and the school psychologist. They did not ask Leon anything about how he was doing in school with his schoolwork. They were all very interested in Leon's life "at home," and what his parents did.

Leon told them that his parents worked night jobs, and that they could not come to school meetings. They asked if Leon felt safe at home. Leon looked around the room, and then he looked right at the principal and said he felt safer at home than he did at school.

After school, Leon saw some older dudes hanging out on the corner. They asked Leon, "Where are you from?" Leon pointed to the large apartment buildings across the street, and he said, "I stay right there."

Then they asked, "What school you go to?"

"I go to Carver," Leon said as he pointed to his elementary school around the corner. "So what high school do you guys go to?" Leon asked.

"We are new to the area, so we have not started school yet," one of them replied.

"So where are you guys from?" Leon asked.

"We just moved down here from San Francisco. My name is Marcus and this is my little brother Jesse."

"My name is Leon. So what are you guys doing standing around here?" Leon asked.

"Just finding something to get into, Marcus said. "It looks like a nice day for a bike ride," Jesse said.

"That sounds good, but I don't have a bike," Leon said.

"We don't have bikes, either," Marcus said.

"Maybe it's time for us to go get some bikes," Jesse said.

Leon realized they were talking about stealing bikes, and Leon knew he could get in trouble for that. Leon also knew that he wanted to make friends with Marcus and Jesse because he had no friends at school.

"I know there are some bikes in the park," Leon said.

Marcus and Jesse both stared at Leon. "Why don't you show us where this park is?"

Leon said, "Okay."

This marked the beginning of Leon's crime spree. For the next six months, Leon, Marcus and Jesse were responsible for a big bundle of bike thefts, vandalism, car thefts, car break-ins, and shoplifting. But Leon's specialty and the specialty of the three-man gang became burglary.

Marcus and Jesse needed Leon because he could fit between stuff and slip in windows to help open up the other doors for Marcus and his brother. Leon was very slick at getting in for burglaries. They started to call Leon, "Little Slick."

The "jobs" started to get more and more risky. At first, Marcus and Jesse always made sure nobody was home. After a while, they were working fast, sometimes doing a burglary every day.

Leon was so good at this. Marcus and Jesse kept calling him Little Slick. Leon felt that he would never get caught. At the time, Leon was eight years old.

**-Leon, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Damn, Leon was a young buck gettin' into thangs. We can't wait for Part 3. Do you think that if Leon had picked up with the right crowd, he would not have gotten in trouble or do you believe that his home life was leading him into trouble? If the social workers, probation officers and police detectives were the same color as Leon, do you think he would have told the truth about his home life? Why or why not?*

**I said I'd always be there  
But I guess you're gonna  
be the one  
There for me now**

### I Said

I said I'd always be  
There I guess I kinda lied  
But I wasn't there when you died  
You popped a pill to get a thrill  
I'm always wearing a frown  
Because you were a queen wearing a crown  
I said I'd always be there  
But I wasn't there when you got buried six feet under  
I said I'd always be there  
But I guess you're gonna be the one  
There for me now  
What's the point on living if we're just gonna die  
'Cause you know I would always do something with my life  
So just hearing you say that  
Is worth giving it a try  
Just remember wherever you are  
I still love you  
I said I'd always be there  
I'm sorry I wasn't there that night  
RIP Babygirl

**-Lil J, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: We feel the pain and guilt you feel at not being able to be with her when she needed you most. First of all, how can you forgive yourself for not being there that night? While you'll always wish you were there, it's not your fault that she died. Secondly, instead of seeing her death as evidence to question the point of living, is it possible to flip it and dedicate yourself to experience more of what life had to offer than she was able to see in her short lifetime?*





## COURT ROOM

Tomorrow morning I'm scheduled for the courtroom, voices in my head sayin' what you gone do. I know soon I'll be ridin' that white county van chained up with the killas and the man.

Tossed all night in my bunk, waitin' for the judge to set me up. I knew just what it was when I got cuffed. I knew that would be the last time I would see the sun. First I pictured myself in jail, in division max. Then I pictured myself at home with my girl and fam. But then I flashed back 'cause my cell door slammed. Now I gotta go see the man... damn. Now I'm bailin' down the hallway I'm hearin' homies screamin' good luck, be safe and I'm like — "always."

**-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: What do you think the future has in store for you? Do you think that you can build yourself a good life once you are released? What needs to change so you can be sure that you are never locked up again?*

## WHAT LIFE MEANS

What's this world mean to me?

Is it living free in society?

It's not dealing with mechanized authority

This is life at the turn of the century

With machines that'll take yo' life with ease

More machines that'll make it so you're able to breathe

The machine that lies so deep in me that makes me hate our society

I both love and hate my life

Hopin' that someone won't take my life

Takin' off on people getting into fights

'Cause the life we lead just don't feel right

So what's this world mean to me

It don't mean shhh if I can't be free

**-Jordan, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: The pain, confusion, internal conflict and glimmers of hope are all here in this wonderful, but sad poem. What is that machine deep inside you that makes you hate our society? What is it about our society that forces so many, especially so many young people, to the margins? What can we do?*

## Stripped Of All Dignity

February, Tuesday the third I was definitely stripped of all dignity, pride, and self-worth. I made the mistake of leaving my friend's house with three guys getting drunk and passing out. I remember the lights turning on and getting dressed then driving back to my friends.

Later that night, I called one of the guys and it shocked me to learn they all had sex with me and invited some other guy to join in. Breaking down crying, I just prayed it was all a dream.

Now I'm here in Juvi. I can't believe my parents could let this happen after Tuesday. I think I've cried so much that the tears can't come out anymore. I feel so ugly and suicide comes across my mind now and again. Of course that's really not an option. Talking to the cops was helpful and counseling too but feeling this low takes away most hope.

**-Whitney, Maricopa SEF, Arizona**

*From The Beat: Rape is probably the worst experience a woman can go through. The plethora of emotions you are feeling are natural after such a horrifying experience. We wish we could comfort you but all we can do is tell you to keep your head up. Try not to let it eat you up inside because if you do — it will. It happened and you can't turn back the hands of time, so you have to try your best to overcome it. Once you do, you will become a stronger person. We also encourage you to keep seeing a counselor and get as much help as you can. Remember, you are not a victim — you're a survivor.*

**Breaking down crying,  
I just prayed it was  
all a dream.**

## Water

My face is relaxed but my nose is tense. I can feel my nose tighten up and the burning sensation start to build up. I give my nose a twitch and I know what comes next.

Everything is getting blurry. I feel my eyes starting to build up with something. I blink my eyes and a little drop of water comes out my right eye. What's happening? Am I crying? Naw! It's just me shedding a tear. I don't cry, I shed tears.

I want to go home, I miss you mom.

**-Kurupt, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: What a beautifully constructed description. You not only capture the physical qualities of built-up tears, but also the emotional qualities that make you "shed tears" but not cry.*

## A Second Chance, Please

I feel sad, lonely and guilty, with great remorse, regret and sadness. If only I had a chance to know what the consequences would've been, I would've never done anything of what I did on that day.

On that day I felt cool, hard, and up for myself. No I'm locked up. My rights have been taken away from me, along with my freedom to hear music, play video games and do what I want.

If I had a second chance to prove myself, the judge would never regret that he or she had released me because if and when I get out, my life is gonna change. I'm gonna stop doing what I used to do, learn to love my parents, my brother and sister. I'm gonna flip my life around because I discovered in here that it's good for me and it's the best way to protect my family. Not with violence but with love.

Leave everybody else alone and learn to love my family because I want to. When I was free, I barely showed my mom, dad, brother and sister I loved them.

Now that I'm locked up, I pray that I could get out soon to prove to them that I do have love. If I could go back in time, before I knew this place, I would show my brother and sister the way to succeed in life.

Today I pray that my family never forgets me 'cause I will never forget them. And all I want is to be with them once again.

**-Eriberto, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Your remorse comes through loud and clear, as do your hopes for a better future. Why do you think you didn't appreciate your family until you were locked up? What is it about freedom that made it difficult to appreciate when you had it, but makes it so easy to appreciate now that it's been taken away? If you're able to be back with your family, are there ways of life you'll have to sacrifice — that you'll be willing to sacrifice — in order to stay free with them? How will you show your brother and sister how to succeed in life?*

**I feel sad, lonely and  
guilty, with great  
remorse, regret  
and sadness.**



## PHONE CALL FROM HELL

as i sit there and worry  
i wonder what my mom and dad  
are going to say  
are they going to be mad  
or are they going to be sad  
i have a lot of worry on my mind  
when i roll up to intake  
i get even more worried  
as they bring me in  
and take off the handcuffs  
then they sit me in the holding cell  
so they can get the paperwork started  
then they come and say  
come on it's time  
for you to make your phone call  
so as i walk over to the desk  
and they ask me for my phone number  
and i tell them and they dial it and then they say  
is mister or missus 'a' there  
and usually my dad picks up  
and so he picks up  
and i say i'm in jail again  
and he says what did you do this time  
and i give him a messed-up lie  
and he says i know you are lying  
and at the end i can almost hear  
my dad's voice in my mind  
it's your fault you are in here

-Timothy, 150 Crew

*From The Beat: No matter what our parents really say, what we hear them say in our minds, is what really stays with us over time, like: "It's your fault you are in here!" It's not just what we fear they feel, it's also what we ourselves may very well feel, yet fear to hear on that phone call from hell. And even when they don't say what we fear, in our minds we hear it clear as a bell! — But what counts most now, is what you do from here on out! Nice writing, Timothy.*

## BED TIME BRINGS ME DOWN

I lie terrified  
By thoughts that break me down  
Open my eyes, surrounded by death  
I can't breathe  
Salty flames reach the corner of my mouth  
Memories come crashing down  
And I'm overcome with loneliness  
Cherished ones, gone for good  
They let me go  
How could they?  
I wasn't ready  
Not now! Not now!  
I haven't proposed  
I haven't apologized  
I haven't fathered  
I'm to my knees  
And fall to the floor  
I lie, terrified  
Open my eyes  
I see the light  
My god  
I'm still alive

-Brixx, 150 Crew

*From The Beat: What a powerful poem! We can feel the pain and anguish of loss and absence. We are very sorry if you did lose a loved one. Keep feeling your feelings and working through them. You are a talented young man and have a gift to express the rawest of emotions in a beautiful way. You are still alive and have so much to give to the world, your loved ones and future loved ones.*

**it's your fault you  
are in here**

## What I Could Have Been

I was so proud of myself, of what I had accomplished, of the path I was on. I had such drive, so much going for me. I was going places, in so many words, but it was all taken away from me.

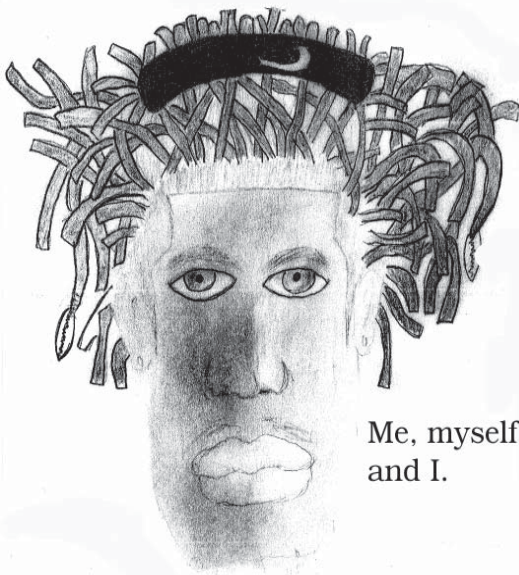
After legally testing out of school, I was forced to go back. I couldn't make money, so I couldn't move out. I couldn't be with my friends, and the last of my family wanted nothing to do with me. My dignity and ambition began to crumble, my self-esteem was shot. Suddenly, I wasn't going anywhere.

I don't think the system owes me time, or money, or any sort of compensation. What the system owes me can never be repaid — dignity, pride, ambition, self-esteem, even the will to live, but the system can't and won't pay me back, and that itself is depressing. I was told and told that I brought this upon myself, that it's my fault that my life is over. They said I gave up my family and friends, that it's my fault I lost my girl. Looking back on three months here, nearly ninety days, and I'm forced to ask myself — is this my fault? Or did the system really take everything over that one misdemeanor?

I'd like to think the system owes me. I'd like to think this isn't my fault, but the system took my trust in myself. I guess they owe me that, too.

-Conrad, Marin

*From The Beat: You don't write what huge event changed all your family's respect for you or why you feel your life is over, but is whatever you did really that bad? Maybe your family had huge expectations for you, and feels you let them down. But one incident, causing one misdemeanor? Whatever anyone else thinks about you, can you keep an equilibrium about how you feel about yourself? How about a sense of humor? Can you analyze what caused you to do whatever brought you into Juvy? And learn from it? And forgive yourself? What caused all this chaos in your life? Why were you forced to go back to school? Why couldn't you get at least a part-time job? Why couldn't you be with your friends? What caused this huge rupture between you and your family? What can you do to repair the damage between you and your family? Can you remind your family and yourself that everyone makes mistakes?*



Me, myself,  
and I.





## Too Much NERVE

As I sit and write  
I run out of words  
Why must you hush me?  
When I have so much to say  
You bite my tongue  
But I taste the blood  
Anger ain't help me  
The way I feel about you  
Feelings are of no essence  
When it comes to you  
Dang! What's happening  
In this world today  
If I'm still here  
But you're up and left me  
Dang! I miss you  
And I want you to know it  
We stayed on your case  
But never listen ourselves  
Dang! Why didn't we listen  
It's all my fault  
Every time I came here  
He comes too  
And then you're alone  
Left to your own devices  
Forget Oakland  
I can't wait to leave  
But I don't want to run  
From you  
One love, Lil' One.

**-Sarkastix, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Whom is this piece speaking to? Your anger? It feels a little bit unclear exactly whom you are speaking to, but it works. There is a lot of frustration in this poem, we can feel it. That is what makes it so powerful. Keep up the great writing!*

**I don't  
want to  
change. Is  
it my mind  
that tells  
me not to  
change, or  
is it all the  
work that  
I strived  
to achieve  
throughout  
my life?**

## A Cropper

it's a feeling i can't get over  
no matter how much  
i leave it alone  
my heart just  
carries it along  
i get this funny feeling  
shivering through my bones  
i try to resist it  
but it's too strong  
then my eyes  
fill up with tears  
i will find  
the courage to cry  
and the comprehending of why  
and i will find  
the teaching behind these tears  
and i hope it will  
wash away all the fears  
sadness  
shame and  
madness

and i will walk on  
confident  
focussed on  
the knowledge that  
i wouldn't let anything hold me back  
because i have so many issues  
the tears that will fall  
will be a combination  
an accumulation of all  
the pains that i've faced  
in their maleficence  
but i will never forget  
since it put this gash in my heart  
yet i will not ever let it tear me apart

**-Tishay, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Again you've touched the core of the process of healing from all the pain you've been feeling. You do indeed need courage to accept the pain and to let your tears freely rain — or else your heart goes numb as it twists with bitter rage and you go dumb, adding more heartbreak and destruction to what's already come. Yet as you say, comprehension provides a better way. Pain is required, but misery is optional. Much love and respect from us all!*

## What's happening In this world today

### Family And The System

This is Twilight, my real name is Ruben. I would first like to start by giving my utmost respect from a fallen angel to everyone taking a minute to read about what I got to say. I'm on my way to CYA, and I've had a lot to think about — my life, and how I can change it, my life and the gangbangng that's been the highlight of it for the past six and a half years. But the full complete thoughts that fill my brain are me not wanting to change.

I don't want to change. Is it my mind that tells me not to change, or is it all the work that I strived to achieve throughout my life? Me losing my mother to a car accident. Me finally meeting my real father after she died at the young age. Me only being eight years old. Then me going into poverty throughout the cities of Hayward and Fremont. Me starting to bang at the age of eleven, me witnessing a murder at a young age. Then so on and so on.

High speeds and smokin' crystal 'came a part of my daily routine in life. I've never felt sorry for myself and I never had a family to feel sorry for me neither. Me coming up alone with my brother and sister beside me was hard. At times I didn't have no places to sleep because I would fight with the people who gave me a place to rest my head. Most of the time I would meet my homies at twelve 'o clock at night and he would unscrew the trunk light to his car and let me sleep in his trunk with the trunk cracked so I could breath (ha ha).

I've been through dope charges to bodily harm on my enemies. I love banging. I don't think I can ever stop. But my point to my insanity is that I've had no family through any part of my insanity, through any part of my struggle. I never let the battle of poverty win over me, win over the things that I've been through, but yet I don't feel sorry for myself. Family has never once been there. And I can truly say that I have one out of the ten of the biggest families in the East Bay itself. Yet none of them want to deal with a troubled vato.

I believe I am just a victim of things I did to maintain. One thing I can say is that all my tias (aunts) and tios (uncles) wanted custody of me when my mom died so they could of gotten that monthly check, so they can keep. Well I can write for days, if I knew how, on my life, but for now I'm gone.

**-Lil' Febo-Twilight, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Thank you for sharing your life with The Beat. You have been through it and we don't feel sorry for you but we are sorry for all the things you had to go through as a child. The cards you were dealt were not fair. We can now see where you are coming from and why you feel you don't want to stop gangbangng. Do you think if you still had your mom and a dad that was there that you would have not gotten so deep in this lifestyle? What would you say to a kid who has family and is thinking about throwing his life and freedom away to be in a gang? You are still a young man with so many possibilities ahead of you, even while in CYA you can take advantage of any programs and you have more life to live when you are out. Keep writing and discovering the many reasons that lead you to CYA and understand yourself and life more and more. Find the truth. You have the potential to be a thinker, not a follower, you are an important person in the world, not a throwaway child... Remember, now that you are a young man, it really is up to you. You are now fully responsible for your true happiness, life and freedom. Are you going to give it all up for banging? We aren't telling you to change, just to see the truth in your life, heart and soul and think about it.*



## BE YOURSELF

People say that colored people that roller blade and skateboard are white-washed. How can you act white or black? I don't understand how you can act a race.

Just do what you want to do. Don't try to fit in because you'll just make yourself look dumb. Be yourself. Most of the time when you follow people, they lead you in the wrong direction.

You best bet is to shake the fake. They'll seem to be your best friend, but when something pop off, it's all bad in a crunch. (They the first ones to bump they gums.)

**-A-Dog, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: We feel you — what do you think it means when folk say that one guy's acting white-washed, or another's acting like he's black? Is it the same for a guy who "acts like a girl" or a girl who's "acting like a guy"? Have you ever found yourself following someone else, only to discover that you need to walk a different path? How do you determine who's fake and who's not?*

## FROM THE DARKNESS TO THE LIGHT

I came from the darkness to the light

Came from being blind to seeing the sight

That after all these years the pastor and preachers were right

I was told I had to flip the script, and stop selling these hits

Trying to get rich quick off another man's trip

But to me, thoughts of the Lord were hazed

Nights that I layed, wondering where was this love that I craved

All the while it was right in front of me

All I had to do was stop, look for it and start to believe

But nothing was clear to see

Corruption and sin was the only life I thought I could lead

But once I accepted the Lord my future took a different path

Went from destroying my life to looking for a way to make it last

Keepin' it real, the night it hit me I had tears in my eyes

The truth and right path is what I finally realized

It was a new birth, a start of a new life

Feeling good from day to day 'cause I know

The Lord will always be down to ride

**-Mike**

*From The Beat: We always applaud when a youngster has a moral/spiritual awakening, whatever path he or she took to get there. How do you think your new-found faith in God will guide you to a new life? What will you be giving up, and what will you be taking up? How does your belief help you get through the day-to-day difficulties that apply to everyone who is locked up?*

## The Animal

My thoughts come together and the instincts kick in. Why is it when I'm on the outs, I'm on the prowl like a tiger? I walk the streets like a big cat walks the jungle, my head held high and in my mind no thought of danger.

At night it's a whole different story. I'm creepin' through the cuts like a panther moving in on its prey. When I'm surprised, I'm like a porcupine. I put up a defense with my needle sharp quills. When I get tired, I'm like a bear after he ate a hive full of honey. When I get to the point of being full of anger, I have to be like a raging bull, not stopping until my anger wears off or I run out of energy.

But when I'm happy, my emotions are deep like a little boy getting his first puppy ever. But don't let this animal confuse you. Underneath it all I'm just me.

**-Kurupt, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: We love that you can imagine yourself a tiger, a porcupine, a bear, a bull — and a little boy! You have a writer's sense, that ability to imagine and to tap into that imagination. This is a wonderful gift, K, and makes us eager to read other creative and imaginative pieces now gestating in your mind.*

## I Feel, I Feel

I feel good, I feel sad

I'm tired of being mad

and making people think

I'm bad in a jail cell

The only thing I can gain

is a rash, but I'm go' maintain

and continue my status of being a sav

But on the reals,

I'm tired on walking this path

It's time to come anew

and in my head I will get the clue

that I'm somebody's precious little boo

And as time go by,

I'm go' have to put on another shoe

To get out the M&M game is a fluke

But I will stay clean

if you know what I mean

I ain't trying to live as a fiend

But some people do

I mean, I mean and I feel, I feel

I gotta keep it real

and stay hard as steel, man

**-Ju-Nut, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: What's the first step towards changing paths? If you maintain your status as a sav, do you think you'll be at risk of falling straight back onto the path that brought you to the Hall? What does it mean to you to be hard as steel, man? Is it about puffing up your chest and presenting an outer shell that gives the appearance of being impenetrable? Or is it about developing an internal strength based on knowledge and determination that is able to hold strong in the most trying times?*

**when I'm happy, my  
emotions are deep like  
a little boy getting his first  
puppy ever.**

## STILL I RISE

I live another day,

now it's time to live another night.

I take it minute by minute,

but somehow I do it right.

Children from the brown minority,  
locked down in the Youth Authority.

De Witt Nelson, Washington Ridge,  
these are places they lock down kids.

It ain't right, it wasn't meant to be,  
we don't belong in no penitentiary.

You got talent, you better use it.

Pick up a pen and write some music  
and if not, boy, play sports.

Skip the hoop game and hit the courts,  
time goes by

but we must strive and succeed.

Until then still I rise.

**-Indio, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: You're right. What they do to youngsters in the Youth Authority (mostly, but not totally, minority) too often makes the problem, and the youngsters, worse. On the same hand, you give excellent advice — take up the pen, make music, play sports, strive and succeed. We hope you'll take your own advice when, again, you find yourself able to make your own decisions in freedom.*





## I'M A YOUNG BOY

I'm a young boy trying to live they life of a man  
I got stress on my left and right hand  
Gotta know tomorrow isn't promised today  
So it's probably best things are happening this way  
A few weekends ago I had a friend die at a party  
I was supposed to be by his side  
A ninja drove by shot him twice drove away to live another day  
Now I live the life of pain 'cause I lost a friend that day  
I need to change my ways before I end up in an early grave

-Lil' J, San Mateo

**From The Beat:** So much of this reads like so many other tragic tales we've heard, all painful and tragic stories that are almost beyond comprehension. There's one element, however, that makes this piece special, and that's the conclusion you end up drawing — that you've learned from this tragedy, that you're not simply going to step into the same traps that ended up bringing him down. What's it going to take for you to start changing your ways? What's the first step you need to take?

## Stay Away From Hate

When I think of the system, I begin reminiscing  
Thinking through my childhood days.  
What went wrong or was it all OK.  
These questions taking up my time up in my mind.  
Abuse, swearing, fighting what's the answer.  
To my own self assurance of creating a disaster  
Drugs, yeah, they played a part.  
But where did they come from at the start.  
Education five days a week.  
Running around school on my two crazy feet.  
Sent to the principal when I did something wrong  
But since my sensors didn't go off, I resorted to a bong  
One hit away from being in the hall  
And all I do is sit and look at the wall  
My family's there  
But what makes me think I'm gonna change this time of year  
Been in programs off and on for a year  
Should've gotten told by a big grizzly bear  
I hate the system, it's like I watch my life fly by  
But on the outs I never pulled it together, even when I try  
Only one phone call away until I'm seen in court  
But who really wants to hear about my current report  
I lied, stole, and cheated for my own self-gratification  
But I know when I get out, I'm gonna take a long vacation  
Stay away from hate  
So I can lay on the beach with a hot babe and contemplate

The Hulk, San Mateo

**From The Beat:** We really like this poem, Hulk. If you keep your eyes on that prize — that little vacation on the beach — then you will be able to do what it takes to stay out of here. We are pulling for you when you go to court. Let us know what happens.

## THE PHONE CALL

Lots of people would call their friends, but when you think about it, your family is the one who is there for you. That's why I would call my mom, 'cause she's the one who would be the first at court, visits and when I get released.

And I feel my mom is the one who cares for me most; I mean my dad cares, but he's barely around.

But when I first call her, I don't tell her everything. The reason I don't tell her everything is because when you get your phone call, the phone be tapped, so yeah. But I luv mom dearly.

-Spud B2, SF/YGC

**From The Beat:** What does your mom think about you getting locked up? It almost sounds as if you are used to being locked up, is your mom used to it? How are you going to be there for your family when you get out?

## Life

I try to calm down  
but too many of my homies remain  
behind the walls  
of prison halls  
if not in a grave  
Is it too late or will it be like this forever?  
Pray to God to forgive me and make my life better  
but no matter what happens, we all gonna die  
So take a look in my eyes  
and feel my demise  
Some vatos might think that all this is made up  
I give a damn of what you think  
'bout some plays like us

-Chop, San Mateo

**From The Beat:** You are right, of course, that death is the inevitable end to all our lives. But the question is, how do we live our lives before we reach that end? When you pray for forgiveness, what does that prayer entail? Is it a promise not to do whatever you're asking forgiveness for? In other words, as you ask something from God, what are you offering in return?

## FACING THE MUSIC

When I got here they made me call my grandpa, 'cause he is my legal guardian, but I really didn't want to call 'cause I haven't been home in hella long or talked to him. And when I would talk to him, I would say I was going to come home.

But the counselor said I had to. He dialed the number and gave me da phone. I was kind scared like 'cause I didn't really know what to say, and I was embarrassed 'cause told him I wasn't never gonna come back. I know I had let him down 'cause I told him when I came to stay wit' him I wasn't gonna be up messin' up. But within five months I was in here and after that I been messing up ever since.

-Tyree B2, SF/YGC

**From The Beat:** Thanks for the honest writing. How did that conversation go? What do you think will get you to settle down? Can you still repair the relationship between you and your grandfather? What will it take?

## Alone

I feel like I messed up my whole life. I feel like I ain't really got nobody. I haven't been able to really talk to nobody for the three months I been in here, so I feel sad 'bout dat.

I feel like I ain't really goin' nowhere in life. They got me on some medicine 'cause my chest and my heart be hurtin'. They said I be havin' pains and shhh, 'cause I been stressin' too much. I been in here fo' three months waitin' to go somewhere, and I'm be in here for like two more.

I be feelin' like I let everybody down, and messed up hella my relationships wit' people. I ain't even talked to a female besides my family since I been here.

-Tyree B2, SF/YGC

**From The Beat:** Sometimes things can get pretty vicious to deal with, and then it feels like nothing is going right. This is your chance to take the time you have in the Hall to work on getting things in order for yourself. Besides the meds, is there anything that helps calm you down? What are you going to be willing to do to repair the relationships you feel you've messed up? Everyone makes mistakes, and sometimes a lot of them, the key is learning from them so you won't feel the same guilt and remorse again.



## CLOSE CALL

I can hear them coming for me  
I hear the voices around asking for me  
The room gets filled with darkness  
And in seconds I feel the emptiness  
My heart gets filled with anger and pain  
I hear the thunder, I see the rain  
The voices are getting louder and louder  
My soul from this world gets farther and farther.  
I hear the clock ticking and ticking  
I feel more than sixteen shots  
I hear the clicking and clicking  
I see holes and blood  
My body crumbles, then hits the floor  
The voices get closer and closer  
But the pain only gets worse and worse  
My body gets caught in the chains of death,  
The room gets colder as I take my last breath  
My body gets filled with fear  
And for the first time, I shed a tear  
He beat me, then grabbed me by the throat  
The devil looked me in my eyes, then laughed as I  
began to choke  
From nowhere came a scream  
I woke up sweating  
It was all a dream.

**-Scarface, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: The tragedy is that this is more than a dream, it is a warning. We hope that your own scream wakes you from more than your slumber, and shakes your life up, so that this nightmare will never become a reality.*

## System Daddy

The system owes me everything I want and need. I figure that the system is a big branch starting from federal organizations such as the CYA.

The system takes so much from the lower income communities and treats them the most unfair. In poor communities there is a lack of education, which the system does not want them to have. When fathers from poor communities are taken to jail, the young men in the family have no male guidance and end up like their fathers. So therefore the system owes everyone without a father a father.

**-Thibo B2, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: That's a pretty grim outlook on things, but we hear what you're saying. Who else is to blame for this cycle besides the system? What do you think it will take for people to rise above this situation? Good thoughtful writing by the way.*

## The Phone Call

My first phone call at the Youth Guidance Center was to my mother. I'm not trying to say that I'm a momma's boy or nothing like that, but I do have much respect for her.

Why did I call my mother first? For the reason that I know that my mother has the most love for me. She held me in her stomach for nine months and still had to deliver me. What other person could say that they went through that with me?

When I told her I was in here she was scared. They were like, "Damn you got serious charges!" That the reason they were scared. I thought that I was going to get out fast, so I told them that. But it don't look that way.

I told my mom the truth, because that's the least she deserves.

**-Cubs B5, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: You don't have to be a "momma's boy" to appreciate the sacrifices your mother has made for you. It strikes us that the honor you pay your mother in this piece speaks to the decency of your heart. There's a simple principle that, if followed, we believe would greatly reduce the violence on the streets, and that is that everybody has a mother, that every mother has sacrificed for her children, and that every man in the world, whether friend or enemy, is some mother's son.*

## All Messed Up In The Brain

I feel all messed up in the brain. I don't know what to do.

I'm about to be home in a couple of weeks and I don't know if I'm going to be good because I know when I get out, all my homies are going to tell me about my homeboy that died. And I don't know what I'm going to do, what to think, or what to say.

When I'm in my room I think about me getting really drunk — just chilling, doing whatever — but I want to change at the same time because I don't want to end up dead, have my family sad.

I don't know what to think, good or bad.

**-Kasper, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: The mental struggle you're goin' through, what you call being messed up in the brain, sounds like sanity to us. On one hand, one of your boys has died, and the temptation to try to get revenge is understandable. On the other hand, though, you're starting to think about the long-term consequences of your actions. You still have a couple of weeks to prepare for being back on the outs, and it's crucial that you continue to think about this. Your homie has already died — isn't one death already one too many? How will you find the strength to make your own decision, and pay your respect to your dead carnal by taking advantage of life in ways he can't anymore?*

## THE TRUTH

Well, here I am getting mad. Hoping I will be doing good and hopefully will be gone by tomorrow, Wednesday.

I just ask God to help me, to forgive me for my mistakes because I know I messed up a lot of times in my life. It's hard being locked up. We got to recognize we're in here because of ourselves. We got in here because we cause ourselves to be in here, locked up in this Juvenile Hall. I have to deal with that because it's the truth.

**-Veronica GU, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: This is such a good, honest piece, Veronica. Some things that have led you to the Hall are beyond your control, but some of them are not, and it's important to take responsibility of the things you can. We wish you all the best.*

## MOM AND DAD

My mom and dad were the first people I called because they are the most important. They come to see me every week, I really appreciate having them around.

I know everyone is not fortunate to have two parents that love them and that are there for them.

They knew why I came here. I mean I had no idea I was going to be here, but now I just learn how to deal with. I call my parents during rec. and talk to them. I talk to them, because they are going through all of this with me.

**-Diddy B5, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: It's always nice to read a piece that pays tribute to both parents for the support and love they give. Your parents are lucky that they have a son who recognizes how much they mean to you. And, of course, you are lucky to have such caring parents.*





## *It's Hard To Change*

**Q-vo Beat.** The reason why I say it's hard to change is because I been trying. But I just realized that life is a trip, que no.

I chose to be a pandillero down for la raza, but once you in the barrio anything can happen, you know. Your family stays away from you 'cause they think if they with you in the wrong lugar, algo malo can happen, like getting shot because of me. Or I can end up locked up for the rest of my life, like some of my homies.

Keep your heads up. You have to deal with it like I do. Sometimes I think I ain't getting' out in a minute because I always fight. Every time I fight, my PO adds two or three months to my sentence.

But now I been trying to be cool with other residents because my jefito feels sick, so I have to help him, you feel me. My dad's life ain't no joke. He has diabetes. Last time I had a visit, I seen my dad hella skinny. That makes me feel bad because my jefita passed away when I was only eleven years old.

So now what I do is stay away from the trouble in this place, and stay to myself. But all this that I'm doing is for the ones who I love, my family. But I'm always mad at the pinche world because I miss my jefa.

Where are you jefe medejaste triste, but I feel you in my heart. Talk to me. Help me survive. All this shhh is killing me inside. But it's hard to change because this is who I am.

**-Chino LCRS, SF/YGC**

**From The Beat:** You seem to know the perils of the life you are living. You have a reason to want to change, so what you gonna do? When you do get out do you think you will be able to stay away from the block, and other things that could get you back into lockup, or worse?

## *The System Owes Me*

this is what  
the system owes me:  
a year and a half  
of having my life back  
happy moments i've missed  
birthdays  
holidays  
friends  
driving  
credits for school  
my prom  
possible girlfriends  
possible new friends  
hangin' out with family  
sleeping comfortably  
moments not watching my back  
taking showers alone  
watching t v  
going to the movies  
good meals  
fast food  
making money with a legit job  
for the most part  
this is what  
the system owes me

**-Socrates, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We feel your pain, and the heat in your heart and brain, as you deliver this list of what you've lost — but why do you feel the system should bear the cost? And what do you mean by the system? Capitalism? Juvenile justice? What was your part you played in putting yourself behind bars this way?

## *Not Listening*

I can't listen at all to nobody at all 'cause I'm a Leo and demand my respect from everything and anything movin'. I don't care about that. I respect you if you respect me. That all I got to say about that, feel me?

But I get out time and time again, and it's just back to doing what I do, just not listening at all to nobody, sometimes not even my family. But now when I get out I might think about it to a certain extent, 'cause it's just something that never changes at all.

I want all my young homies and big homies to know I'm holdin' it down forever. Thuggin' can't stop at just any given time. It ain't going down like that 'cause whether or not I'm in the beef or decide to jump out of the beef, people still gonna want my head 'cause of shhh I done did in my past.

That's why I just choose to do my thang until my casket drop. That's why I just put myself into the category of not listening. But I'm out. Be easy.

**-Cudabeez B5, SF/YGC**

**From The Beat:** We wonder if not listening has more to do with being young and immature, and less to do with being a Leo. In other words, we have seen positive mental growth in you, Cudabeez, over these months, and one of the things we've noticed is that you are a much better listener than you used to be. We hope we're right, because, as you've already figured out, listening is one strategy that might keep you out of the mix — and out of jail.

**they be trying to hold  
us down now that they  
see us rising out of the  
gutter and moving up!**

## **DON'T WANT NOTHIN' FROM THIS SYSTEM!**

I always think about what the system owes me, but I don't want shhh from them! The system owes me a lot.

They owe me everything your eye can see in America — all the mountains, valleys, rivers, trees! The only thing I want is for things to go back to the way it used to be, back when my ancestors used to rule the land of what is now known as America!

Everybody already knows what they took from us. And they're still trying to take from us — saying we owe them because we're finally making money with casinos! So they want some of it.

If it's true that we owe them, then imagine how much they owe us! Think about it. We suffered all these years, and we still struggle just to survive. And they be trying to hold us down now that they see us rising out of the gutter and moving up!

But they just steady taking, and there's nothing they can do to make up for what they have done! So if they don't leave, I don't want shh! All I want is everyone to go back where they come from, so I can learn how to be like my people.

**-Sho-moe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We knew you could wield the power of the pen to the page, but up till this piece, you've never allowed yourself to express your rage. Yet this topic opened a wound that's been bleeding for centuries! Broken treaties, genocidal massacres, swindles, rip-off's, and massive land appropriations against the free Indian nations. Your bitterness is well-taken. And we hear your personal position on state taxation loud and clear! Maybe Schwarznegger ought to take a peek right here in the pages of *The Beat* before he adds to a history of injustice and misdeeds.



## My Grand Mom!

When I got locked up, the person I called was my mom, 'cause at the time she was the only person that cared about me. And when I called her, I told her the truth — I don't lie to her!

She is not my real mom. She is my grandma. My real mom died last year. And after her death — it just seemed like everything was just on my shoulders! But now I know, I just got to let things go.

**-Taze, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: There is so much love, and sadness; so much straight-up tragedy, in this short piece! The weight of the world was on your young shoulders. But now you're a little older and a whole lot wiser. God bless your mom in heaven and your (grand) mom here on earth — and you, too!*

## That First Phone Call

When I first got locked up, I called my auntie/mom — my patna's mom.

I called her because she was the one I was living with at that time. Plus she was the only person I cared about and respected. I still do, even though I haven't talked to her for a cool minute. I wish I could see her and talk to her.

Unfortunately, when I called her, I couldn't get in contact with her. If I would have gotten in contact with her, I would have told her the truth about what happened and why I had got caught up.

I also called my grandmother, but I really don't remember what she said. I remember that I did not want my mother to find out — but she did!

Now, while I'm incarcerated, I don't call nobody. I was calling, but I quit. I just write instead.

**-Big Howard, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This is a very interesting piece, and well-written. But then after getting our interest, you leave us hanging. Why don't you talk to your "auntie/mom" anymore? Did you try? And what happened when your mom found out? And why do you no longer call but prefer to write? Tell us some stories!*

## The System Owes Me & Every Black/African American

I think what the system owes me, is my friend's life back! And the system owes every Black/African American a good education!

And the system owes us for all the times they build a new jail, while at the same time they are knocking down our schools one by one! They'd rather spend money on jails for us than on schools.

They're having modern day slavery — but in jail! That's why they want everybody locked up. That's why instead of schools they're building jails for us.

**-Lamar, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: In the end, paying fourteen cents an hour to prisoners for work they do to get out of their cells, is very much like slavery. So the question is, what can you do? Stay in school, get a real job — avoid the trap! Then fight back, for better schools, more jobs, better pay. Maybe reparations, okay?*

**They'd rather spend money on  
jails for us than on school**

## I Called My Girlfriend

When I got locked up on January seventeenth, the first person I called was my girlfriend — but we don't go out anymore because I'm here at Camp.

I called her because I wanted to explain my situation, and I wanted to let her know that everything will be okay. But I did lie to her. I told her that I would be getting out soon even though I knew I wouldn't.

I lied so that she would stop crying and so that she wouldn't worry so much. It wasn't easy for me to lie to her, 'cause I knew that sooner or later she would find out the truth.

Whenever I have recreation, I call my mom. And she gets me three-ways with my friends and other families! I like to call my friends to let them know how I'm doing and to plan stuff out for when I go on a home visit and just to say what's up!

**-Peanut, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: We remember your pain the week you came back and wrote a piece about your girlfriend breaking up with you over your doing time at Camp. Now we know the whole heartbreaking story. Your feelings for her are obvious, and we truly hope things can work out for you. But we also remember your piece about how you thought you were doing coo' hitting house licks. This sad time is a direct consequence of that lie you told yourself back then. We don't mean to rub it in, but you need to begin with a foundation of truth. Do right, and love will come to you, plus stay, too. Terrific piece, and props to your mom!*

## I FEEL

i feel like  
i'm confused  
and lost  
i feel like  
exploding  
but i have to think  
about the cost  
i feel like  
dong a lot of things  
but i have to pay  
to be the boss  
i'm trying  
to keep to  
the right path  
but i'm lost  
and i'm afraid  
i might get tossed  
things i feel like doing  
don't always have  
a good cost  
but now i know  
and next time  
i won't be lost  
that's what i feel

**-Telefaro, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You won't be lost next time you feel like exploding? Or next time you're faced with temptation? Or next time you're free? We admire your rhymes and get what you're trying to say about how you feel today — but about next time, what are you trying to say? (Props on joining The Beat team!)*

## LEAVIN'

the death of  
pastor  
i am leavin'  
the system  
i am an older/  
younger version  
leavin' my troubles  
behind  
leavin' my wife is hard  
to find  
leavin' the streets  
has no true time  
leavin' the game  
with every last line  
leavin' without hope  
is my eternal bind  
leavin' this life  
will make you feel blind  
goodbye to you  
i am now dead  
the birth of jepeabo  
has come

**-Jepeabo, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: A name means a lot. It's symbolic of who you are and what you've got, or want, or love. Pastor J-Wizzle has a flock of readers in The Beat who can't wait to see what Jepeabo has to show, but they'll just have to wait till next week, ya know!*

**i am leavin'  
the system**





## *To the Curious Youngsta*

this piece is to the youngsta  
that wanna experience  
juvenile hall  
first you come to receiving  
then they have you wait  
in a tank  
for hell a long  
then they ask you  
questions  
then they take you to  
a changing room  
where you get undressed  
in front of a staff  
then you take a cold shower  
then they take a picture of you  
for your wristband  
then they will take you to intake  
where you're in your room  
for like nineteen hours  
the five hours left  
are for school and rec'  
then they take you to court  
a couple of days later  
when you come back from court  
they will take you to a unit  
when you get there  
they get your blankets  
and you go to your room

most of the time without a pillow  
and almost every night  
you can't sleep  
because people be  
yelling out their doors  
and they bang on the walls  
so then staff wakes you up  
around seven fifteen in the morning  
and you have to wash up  
that means you gotta brush your teeth  
and wash your face  
then you go back to your cold lil'  
room  
and wait to go eat breakfast  
ninety per cent of the time  
your food is cold  
so you got ten minutes to eat  
and you can't talk or you get an hour  
and that means  
you can't come out for rec'  
then after you're done eating  
you go to school  
for forty-five minutes  
they you're back in your room  
for another thirty minutes  
then you go to your next class  
when you come back  
you eat lunch  
then you go to your room

till your next class starts  
once your last class ends  
you're in your room  
then around four in the afternoon  
they get you out to exercise  
for thirty minutes  
then you're back to your room  
till five thirty  
then you eat dinner  
and when you finish eating you get  
from seven fifty to eight forty-five for  
rec'  
after that your day is over  
and once you're in the system  
it's hard to get out

**-Lil' Creepy, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You give us a detailed sense of the lock-step tedium and repression of a normal day in the Hall. Now we know you don't like it at all, and yet in your other piece this week, you say that jail doesn't change you. Well, of course, nothing can change you but you! So, what we wonder is, why would you choose to continue to do what keeps bringing you back to this regimented oppression? If you ever do want to change, it starts with a decision. But that's just the start. It takes all the courage and determination you can muster, at least for a while. After enough time, you develop new habits — and maybe new friends who won't call you weak for changing! — Or don't change, and the system will send you down for a long time, for more of this, only worse. And it's not worth it.*

## **The Years The System Stole From Me**

What does the system owe me? The system owes me my life. Since the age of 12 the system has been setting me up knowing I can't do a program without getting in trouble in Oakland. And every time they just send me not trying help me even though I have asked for help many times.

The system is made a certain way — once you come to Juvenile Hall — they got you trapped. Everybody who came at least once, they ended up coming at least three or more times. If I would have known how this system works, I would have played my cards better than I did. I missed out on at least three years of school. I wasn't able to see three of my folks before they got killed last year. I missed out on football and basketball leagues. I missed my mom's and my brother's birthdays, Christmas, Halloween and a lot of important events I could have spent with my family.

The system owes me a sixteenth birthday. I can never have back four years as a teenager. I can never have back my younger years I have spent locked up in group homes, Camps, Juvenile Halls and CYA's because of the system and I'm still in the system going to CYA and I just got back from YA. Even now I got to go back — it's all because the system.

**-Lamar, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: By reading this, we feel that you owe yourself a lot too. Do you think that you were motivated by the wrong things while growing up? What motivates you nowadays? Do you see yourself at least trying to relive some of those lost childhood days? You owe it to yourself.*

**i feel like my life has  
been living a lie  
and during this time  
i was the one being blind**

## **LIVING A LIE**

i wish i could be  
out there doing  
what i want  
without no one telling me  
what to do  
and without worries  
about probation on my mind  
i feel like it's really hard for me  
being in this situation  
'cause this was not my expectation  
being in a wing  
ain't really my thing  
i'm just doing my time  
waiting for every day to go by  
like a blink of an eye  
i feel like my life has been living a lie  
and during this time  
i was the one being blind

**-Lil' Will, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: It hurts to wake up and realize that you've been living a lie, but it hurts more not to wake up till you're locked down for life or you die. Your life is not what you want today, but tomorrow you can make it all okay. Meanwhile, your poetry is a delight to read!*

**Since the age of 12 the system has  
been setting me up knowing I can't  
do a program without getting in  
trouble in Oakland.**



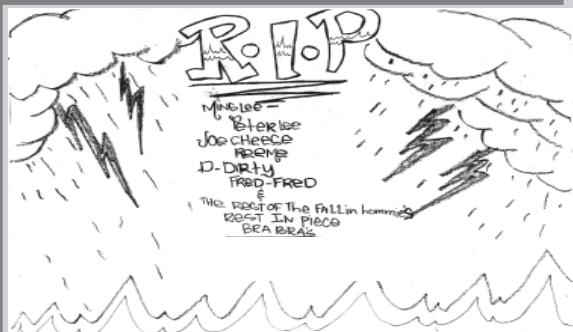
# Standouts

## KEEP THE PEACE

i strive to see the sun  
alive — but gone  
in a split second  
clapped in the lung  
yet i'm still among  
ninjas on the left side  
wit' narcs an' snitches  
still out for my riches  
but why speak faulty on my name  
if y'all can't maintain the pain  
recognize the blood of a gee  
runs through my veins  
but i'm fantasizin'  
on characterizin' pretty thighs  
'cause i'm locked in juvenile  
jus' tryin' to forget the lies  
by ninjas can't even look me in the eyes  
when i was out on the run  
i'd keep it so stunned always on one  
smokin' poison in my lungs  
i was a slave to the gun  
when the bell done rung  
to front lines of a battle  
ninjas ushered like cattle  
'cause it was time to ride  
an' rebellion to my surprise  
meant incarceration or homicide  
when animosity was stalkin' me  
an' i found nowhere to hide  
i'd jus' throw up my sign  
an' let the funk collide  
electrified  
by the swiftness  
of a deuce-five  
angry wit' this business  
of genocide  
it ain't no color line  
between pride an' respect  
so i never was from no set  
'cause fools will test you  
so i tried to keep the peace  
but protect my vessel

**-Iza, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** What you failed to understand, is how incarceration provides you a chance, not only for time out from the madstreet, but a chance to change the direction of your feet. You need to leave the left side for the right, rebel against the armies of the night, 'cause it's suicide or incarceration for life, if you to continue to ride! And ride for what? There's no pride in genocide, no self-respect in being the next ballistic statistic! You were graced with survival after you got shot in the lung; now pull yourself up from the darkness and live in the sun! A fall becomes a blessing, when you're ready to learn the lesson.



## Mother's Day Coming Up...

Lately while I been in my room, I been thinking of all the stress I caused you from day one. And now that Mother's Day is coming up and I'm not out so I can't buy you something, so I can show you a little something about how I feel.

There is nothing in this world that I can buy or give to you to show you how I feel about or to pay you back for all the things you done for me so I'm gone try to express some of my feelings on paper.

But what I'm really tryin' to say is that I appreciate all the things that you have done for me and I want to apologize for all the stress I caused, but now that I look back on all the things I was doing, it makes me think if I had one wish I would turn back the hands of time and change all the things that I did that caused you to stress, like staying out all night not knowing that you would not go to sleep without me in house.

**v-Lil' Molly, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You are one of the only people in The Beat that wrote about their mother this Mother's day week. That must mean you really love her! Send her a copy of this when it gets printed and it will be sure to put a bright smile on her lovely face!

## NERVOUS & SCARED

I feel nervous because of my case. Also I feel scared because of how many times I've been back and forth to court — and they keep detaining me! I feel scared because I don't know if they're going to release me.

To the young and dumb — don't get mixed up with the wrong crowd like I did. Choose a better life to live. Don't go back, go forward. Don't look back, keep your focus in front of you. 'Cause you don't need this, you need a j-o-b! Then things like cars are easy to get. Go to school!

**-Marcel, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes we get a vibe off a young detainee that says: leadership, intelligence, and a readiness to accept the responsibilities of maturity. That's what we see in your writing and in you. Props! We wish you all the best at court.

## Called My Aunt

When I first got locked up, the first phone call I made was to my aunt. I called her, because she was my guardian at the time. And if anybody could get me out of the situation I'm in, it would be her.

But that wasn't the case. This time when I called, they left a message. Then, I called in the morning. I got her on the phone, and she said those three devastating words: "They're keeping you."

And that's when it hit me. "I'm not going home tonight!" It's been two weeks since then, and hopefully I can go home tomorrow — and never come back!

**-Shawn, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for a such a strong. We hope you got home. Even so, we want to warn you — if you want to stay out of the system, stay off the spot. Sometimes that simple choice, will take all you've got.

## THE WAY I FEEL...

The way I feel,  
ometimes I don't even know how I feel  
anymore.

Being locked up  
takes everything away  
from a man.

Been locked up  
is a very bad situation  
to be in.

It takes just about everything away from you  
except for your integrity, faith and religion.  
But the most common feelings for me these days is sorrow,  
sadness and humbleness.

**-Everything, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** How do you deal with all these mixed feelings that flow through you? What can you do to make sure that you are releasing your feelings in a positive way?





## A BETTER PERSON

i been through so much  
through the years i have experienced  
lots of trials and tribulation  
but i have overcome a lot  
and i'm proud of my accomplishments  
i been through a lot through my young years  
which shows who i have come to be  
through these times i've learned not  
to knock people down for what they do  
and never judge somebody  
before getting to know their past  
and what they have been through  
this all goes to show  
i have become a better person

**-Lil' Mama Hanna, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Just to have survived the dangers and strife of some of our lives, is an accomplishment to be proud about. But to survive and also strive to improve yourself as a human being, is something to shout about! Props.*

## The Phone Call

The phone means a lot to me in here. It's what I look forward to everyday. Sometimes we don't get to use the phone though. Like today, since "The Beat" came thru, we aren't allowed to use them. During rec, which is from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM, I try to use the phone as much as I can. The first person I would call is this girl I know, she told me she would do anything for me because she likes me, so I have her give me as many three-way phone calls as she can.

She would three-way my cousin first so I can tell him that I'm doing o'right in here and all about my court situations. And when he's on the block he would pass the phone to all the other heads, so I can say, "what's up" to them. They always tell me the same thing unless something popped off that day. They always tell me I ain't missin' nothing out there, just money. Also not to stress and keep my head up in here.

Sometimes there's shhh that we wanna tell each other, but since the phones are being recorded — we hold back. After that, I would call my female and lust for a minute. I would call my lil' homie Augie. Much love, keep your head up lil' homie.

**-Lil' Johnnie, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Do you just take advantage of that girl because she three ways you or do you like her in return? Do you ever call your family or the people that visit you? What is the best part about talking to people on the phone? What is your favorite part about the conversations you have?*

## A BLACK AND BROWN JUVENILE HALL

What's good y'all? This ya boy Big Samoa up in max. To me and a lot of people I know, the system is unfair. If you don't believe me, go to Juvenile Hall.

I've been in two units and I've only seen two white kids in separate units. I know for sure that there are more white kids committing crimes, except the police don't harass white kids as much as the do minorities. If a white kid commits a crime, a smack on the hand from the system, but if a minority commies a crime — he/she gets to do the time.

For example my sister got into a fight with a white girl, but the white girl started it. To make a long story short my sister got arrested and the white girl didn't. So my point is the system needs to focus on the white kids just as much as the minorities. Aight then Beat Within — I'm gone, big ups to my lil' bra J-Killa, I'll see you when I get out.

Even if I didn't commit a crime I would still get harassed. I was walking in front of my school when school got out and one of the school officials told me not to walk on campus because she said I didn't go to that school. Anyways I walked towards the back and then cut through the school and headed to McDonalds. When I got to McDonalds at least twenty police cars rolled up to McDonalds coming to arrest me.

When they tried arresting me they swung me across the McDonalds counter and then slammed me to the floor. The officer later said I kicked him but it's on camera so I ain't tripping. The reason the police came to McDonalds is because the principal of my school called the police and told them I had started a fight but I didn't.

Anyways the police let me cut 45 minutes later because they had nothing on me. It's true if people didn't commit crimes there probably wouldn't be as much police racism, but people are always going to commit crimes so police need to be racist free.

**-Big Samoa, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: It's true; the racism is definitely there with in the system. We as a society have to still learn how not to put labels on each other. For you that just means you gotta keep your tracks clean. Keep as far away from trouble as possible. Do you think that police bother law-abiding minorities? Why or why not? Do you truly think all police are a little racist? We hope you realize there are good cops too.*

## The Fight

The fight

Your back against the wall

Your hands up in the air

Punches come from everywhere

For one moment in your mind you go blank

And when you wake up

The fight was over and...

Nobody was standing there but you

**-Lil' Rocky, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Wow! What kind of battles were you fighting with yourself? Or are you realizing that you only have yourself in the end?*

## Owe Me Respect

I think the "system" owes me and every other person who has been locked up or has had to sit before a judge respect because when I go to court the public pretender don't listen.

They just tell me stuff that leave already talked to the judge about. They lie to your face and they really don't care what happens to you. I think they should respect us even though we might have committed a crime. They should listen to what we have to say and give us a chance to help ourselves.

They just send us to Camp, a group home, CYA and all the other places they can send us. They don't want to help us get our lives together and help us grow up to be a functioning member of society. So all I ask for from the system is respect even though I did commit a crime.

**-Josh, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Why do you think that many people in the system don't listen to what the youngsters are saying? How could you make someone hear what you have to say? What about if you showed this piece to the judge or your PO or someone who will at least try and hear you out?*



## My Life

Well in my life I went through a lot of shhh. I remember it like it was yesterday, it went from me growin' up in Hayward postin' on the spot when I was like nine or ten with my folks Leo, Lil' Joe, and all the other homies. That's when I started to drink and smoke weed and see my dad as a OG getting in high speed chases with the HPD bouncin' on EM and comin' back to the hood and keep puttin' it on the map.

When I was grown up my dad was goin' in and out the "pen" 'cause he was out puttin' in work robbin' and kidnappin' foo's that was sellin' dope, car jackin' foo's and bein' on the news and shhh.

5-0 always used to come to the "pad" and kick in the front door 'cause he be high speedin' and they can't get him. But after bein' on the run for a year or so, each time they was lookin' for him, someone drops a dime and he's off to the "pen."

Me, I would be on the turf or with some homies and females. I was like 11 or 12 years old when I caught my first case, it was a GTA. I was in intake for like two days then I got released. I caught two more GTAs and my last one they sent me to a group home in Stockton. But before I got to the group home in Stockton, I told them I wanted to get something to eat at a BBQ place. So we stopped and I asked for my money. I only had \$20 and he gave me \$5, so I went in the store and bought a soda then I ask if I could get the rest of my money and he gave it to me. I walked past the BBQ place and bounced on 'em.

I was on the run for like four months then I got caught and they sent me to a group home in Visalia with a homeboy and then a homeboy from my 'hood came and we bounced and caught the Greyhound to Fresno, and the homies came and picked us up.

I was on the run for about two months, then they sent me back, and my close homeboy Payaso was there I stay for like two or three weeks and Payaso ran then a week later after I saved up like \$140, I cut and went to the Greyhound, but they wouldn't sell me a ticket.

So I cut to the mall by my group home and was walkin' by the police station and I guess it was a little impound yard with no gate around it and there was this motorcycle with a key in it. I tried to start it but it wouldn't so I left it and keep walkin' for like 10 min and seen a Camry but I needed a flat head. I was lookin' in the car and found one so I started to do my thing and got it started. So I cut and filled up the tank and rolled down the windows and was knockin'.

It took like three hours 'cause it was past Bakersfield. When I got in the bay, I was feelin' hella good but I had to get out that G ride 'cause the hood was hot. I was on the run for about four months then I got caught and my dad just got out the pen. He came to court and asked if they could send me to Camp. Then they did and I was at Camp doin' it live every weekend.

Then task came and got me for a robbery that I didn't do, and my bros in the "Y" and I might be on my way to the "Y" and my dad's on the run again high speeds and shhh, the only people I got out here is my homies and my sister and my aunt Jami; I know she's always gonna be there for me and my two cousins that I stay with.

And last but not least, I'll always have my 'hood.

**-Green Eyes, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Nice writing!! Do your homies try to keep you focused on staying on the right track? What kind of homies do you have? The kind that will keep you down? Sometimes, your company can be your downfall. Do you see yourself getting out of the system ever? How can you build a life for yourself away from incarceration? How do you show your aunt appreciation? She's always gonna be there for you, but what about her? Whose gonna be there for her? You wanna be there for her — be there! But, if it's all about you, then in time you are going to have to learn to be your own man and not rely on folks who are hurt by your actions.



## RING, RING, RING

This is the phone call that I first made when I first got locked up. It's between me, my dad, and my brother:

Dad: Hello!

Me: Hello!

Dad: What happened? What did you do?

Me: Nothing serious.

Dad: I just left the Juvenile Hall, and they told me that you have to stay here.

Me: I know. They told me that too.

Dad: Why? Why did you do it?

Me: I don't know why. It was a stupid decision I made.

Dad: Well, now you have to stay there.

Me: I know. Is my brother with you?

Dad: Yeah.

Me: Can I talk to him?

Dad: Yeah, take care, and if anything happens, call me, OK?v

Me: Okay.

Dad: I love you!

Me: I love you, too.

Bro: Hello!

Me: Waz up?

Bro: Nothing. Chillin'. You?

Me: Nothing.

Bro: Damn, bro, you messed up. This time you probably won't get out.

Me: Shhh, I know. But look, bro I gots to go now. My five minutes are up. I'll holla at you later.

Bro: Aight, Man, stay up and call me whenever you want to, aight?

Me: Aight, Stay up!

Bro: Aight, then. Late.

Me: Late

(Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep)

**-Lil' Carlos, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** That was probably a Beat first. No ones ever shared something like a phone call conversation with us. You've made history! What was your favorite part about the phone call? Do you reminisce after you hang up the phone? Do you miss your family? If you could rewind the hands of time, would you have spent more time with your family?





## Back In the Hall

When I went to court, the judge was saying hella stuff, and I was like, "Please don't take me back to the Hall!"

So when he said that a minor should be placed in placement, I started to cry — because I had just got out on the twenty-fifth of March!

So I started to go dumb when that no-good public defender didn't say anything but, "You won't be going back home."

So I was like, "You hella stupid! Why didn't you help me?"

She just looked up at me and said, "Your probation officer wants you to go back to jail."

And I was like, "I refuse to eat that food — and take off my stuff and squat and cough!"

And they was like, "You don't have no program."

I said, "So?!"

They said, "You want to be treated like a dog, then we going to treat you like a dog!"

So I said, "Forget y'all! Kiss me where the sun don't shine!" And that's all what happened. And now here I am, back in the Hall. (RIP Dep; RIP NuNu.)

**-Queazy, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: It can't feel fair to be sent back to the Hall just because you're a minor, especially after being free for barely a month! But going dumb won't help, and it can make things worse. We understand how you felt, but you need practice controlling yourself.*

## MY CONFESSIONS (PART THREE)

she gone  
an' now i'm alone  
she won't answer the phone  
but got to let it burn  
baby if you come back  
i'll give you my throwback hat  
just give me one more chance  
and i promise  
i won't miss a step in our dance  
but got to let it burn  
i promise to take care  
of my responsibility  
one more kiss  
will blow my heart to italy  
but got to let it burn  
i cry every night  
and regret that we had a fight  
oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh  
can you feel me burning  
oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh  
so many years  
so many months  
i'm still burning till she return  
(to be continued: i'm out)

**-Sonic Boom, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You bring your lyrics to the melody, and your sentiment speaks of your yearning for yesterday's love to be returning. But while your heart's on fire with nostalgic desire, you just got to let it burn! We can't wait to read your next turn.*

## Like a Book

Today I feel like a book, because I want to tell my sad story about my life. And when I'm done, somebody can read it and get something out of it!

Then if my reader is going through the same thing as I was going through, or even something like what I was going through, then I would be able to help that person out, in a good way, by them reading my book called, Life With Depression.

The book would also have positive things in it, about how I got myself out of depression and how I became a professional actor! This book about my life, would have a lot of things in it from my life. For example, it would show depression driving me to try to kill myself. It would also have my family in it, and what I want to be in life — and lots more!

**-Mark, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You can write in The Beat that parts or chapters of your autobiography — your book, called Life With Depression. Then others who are feeling lost and alone, so low they can hardly go on, will find in pieces (as in this one) someone who understands their pain; someone who can show them that they have a future and a whole new life to gain, if they can just maintain, hold on, move on, and stay strong — like you!*

## My Life

### Part One

my life is based on nothing but drugs  
cars hoodlums and gettin' mugged  
i wish that this world was nothing but love  
if i could change one thing in this world  
it would be to stop the violence  
and use my sense of thinking  
i wish i could change the world  
just as quick as someone blinking  
but i think i can change the world just by being me  
i can't be no one else except for who i choose to be

### Part Two

one day i will complete a program  
then i'll be drivin' a brougham  
i need a sign from god before i die  
i think about what i'm gonna do when i get out  
and then i start to cry  
i wanna change everything  
but everything is a lie

### Part Three

i don't know what i want to do in life  
but it's gotta be something good  
i know everybody wanna get out the hood  
i don't know what i'm gonna do in this life of mine  
maybe i need to take it a step at a time  
i'm blinded by the facts of life  
i need to read all my surroundings once or twice

**-Rasheed, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You say it's all a lie, but if you take it one step at a time, you'll find truth in you. So focus on what's in front of you, and do the program you need to do. Props on your rhymes and your thinking, too. You know where you've been, you see where you are — choose well and you'll go far!*

**I started to go dumb when that no-good public defender didn't say anything but, "You won't be going back home."**



## FIFTEEN YEARS OLD

fifteen years old  
and i'm livin' life so heated  
fifteen years old  
already got my baby girl pregnant  
fifteen years old  
ready to bring forward a son  
fifteen years old  
ain't got time for no fun

fifteen years old  
and i'm livin' life so heated  
fifteen years old  
already got my baby girl pregnant  
fifteen years old  
ready to bring forward a son  
fifteen years old  
ain't got time for no fun

frustration takin' over  
'cause i'm havin' a baby  
it's drivin' me crazy  
but i know i cannot be lazy  
hella drama  
comin' with karma  
my son needs a mother  
should i leave her  
deceive her  
or hold on to her and keep her  
i need to talk  
i need some answers to my questions  
real quick  
'cause i'm on the verge of breakin' her down  
and takin' my kid  
but i got a heart like everyone else  
so i'm thinkin' it over  
about the times we spent  
under the stars makin' love to each other  
she's havin' my boy

and i know he is going to be so cute  
huggin' and lovin' him  
doing things a father should do  
singing him to sleep  
somethin' so very long and so sweet  
my baby boy i love you son  
no one else can compete  
dijon — that's a good name  
little boy what do you think  
oh no he starts cryin'  
so give him his baby drink  
pukin' all over my throwbacks  
i'm ready to begin a new life  
and give my boy possession  
of something that wasn't mine  
and that's a childhood  
no gangstas no rippas and babysittas  
i dedicate my life to you son  
from this day forward i promise you  
i'll always be there  
be ready to walk a path  
of a special life we could share  
i'll teach you all of the finer things  
that will keep you ahead  
from goin' to school  
to playin' ball and gettin' chicks in yo' bed  
i'll teach you to do right  
but i'm hopin' that you do wrong  
so you can learn from yo' mistakes in life  
and keep goin' on

**-Scooby, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You don't need to wish for your son to make mistakes, just teach him to bend before he breaks — and show him what it takes to be there for the ones you love. We don't know much about his mother, but it's better to have a mother and father than just one or the other. Now you've got a reason to strive to rise from the street and claim a stable life, the responsible kind that works everyday and comes home each night. And even if you can't work it out with his mother, that will always be your son and no others; and he'll want to be like his dad — so don't go back to doing bad. Just bring yourself to him on a regular, 'cause he needs nothing more spectacular. Fifteen's too young, but here comes your son; so it's time to have some family fun — and concentrate on getting your education done. Take it one day at a time and you'll do fine. Meanwhile, thanks for this fabulous rhyme. Show it to him later on down the line.*

## My First Love

The first love I ever felt for somebody was this girl. This girl made me feel special in one way. She was nice, had a soft voice and she never treated me bad.

This girl was trying to make my life change, but it was too late because I already had a warrant out for my arrest. She told me to turn myself in, but I didn't want to end up back in here. She said to not be scared because in here nothing bad can happen to you, but the things you were doing out there can end up getting you killed. She told me all this the day before they got me, like around 2:45 pm.

I guess she really cared about me because that night like around 1:30 am the cops came to my house to pick me up. So now I'm here doing time and not letting the time do me. We are still together, and hopefully I will get out to be a different Daniel.

**-Daniel, Maricopa SEF, Arizona**

*From The Beat: How were you able to recognize that she was trying to help you when she was suggesting that you turn yourself in? What will it take to be a different Daniel when you get out, one who has the wisdom that comes from going through the experiences you've gone through and has the strength to learn from his past mistakes?*

## Phone Call To Mom

When I first came to Juvenile Hall I first called my mom and tried to explain my situation to her, but it's like when I try to say something, my words never exist to her, because she was still screaming and nagging at me. So that makes me feel even more worse.

I get speechless. I used to not let my tears drop when I'm held in this facility, but when my mother said those things, it broke me down in tears like a shattered glass and I thought I was doing well.

**-One Golden Child, Marin**

*From The Beat: Does it somehow seem like your mom can get to you like no one else on earth? Do you think maybe it's because she knows you better than anyone else does, and when you hurt, she hurts? Do you think she's worried about you and scared for you, because you're beyond her control and help up in Juvy? How can you make sure, when you get out, that you'll never put her or yourself through this mess of getting arrested again?*

**when I try to say something,  
my words never exist to her**



## Love For One

Many people don't understand love. I've never loved anyone as much as I do my brother. My brother is my homie. He's always been there for me. We've never been split up for more than a day or two at the most. Now I'm here and he's going through a tough time in his life and I can't do shhh about it. Five years in foster care together, always sharing each other's emotions.

Now he's on the run 'cause my mom's crazy. You run, I'll follow. We promised one another if you go to foster care, I'll go with you. The first time I smoked weed, scraped my knee, man, I threw up all over him and his wannabe gigolo, homie. Every time he laughed and asked if I was okay. Now he's on the outs I'm on the in and wishin' I was with him. That's love. If someone you said your love died, would you kill or forgive?

**-Jewlz, San Luis Obispo**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you two have a really tight relationship. But do you try to keep each other positive? What do you think would happen if you took care of your business and encouraged him to handle his and then be together? Tough question you ask in the end. What would you do if your brother was killed? Why? Does it depend on the circumstance? We have another question for you. What would your life be like without your brother? What would you do to fill the gap he left in your heart? What would he want you to do in your life to carry on his memory?

## Hurtful Tendencies

I have known a couple people who have committed suicide. My boy, Steven, killed himself two years ago with a shotgun after a fight with his girl. If I could have said something to him before he left us, I would want to tell him he meant a lot to me and had a lot of influence on me in his short time with me. He left a kid and a wife to live with the memory of him and nothing more.

Me, personally, I have tried to commit suicide a couple of times. I don't think I want to die now, but there have been times I felt like I had nothing left to live for and tried to slit my wrist or overdose on crystal or pills. It never worked, thankfully, but it got close.

If I had to give advice to someone thinking about it, I would say, take a second and think about the people who you'd be leaving behind and if what you're down about is really that bad. Life gets better, so hold on and keep going.

**-Chad, San Luis Obispo**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for sharing these honest, sad experiences. Your advice is really good, too. It's crazy how many people we impact and don't even know it half of the time — the neighbor we smile at every morning, the person we give our seat to on the bus, or on a negative tip — the homie we didn't call back when he was in a time of need. And those are just the small things. Do you think it's all of those relationships — the big ones, like our family and friends, and the small ones — that can keep us surviving, day-to-day? What are other reasons we're motivated to rise and shine every morning?

**Just when everything was going peachy, she called me up on the phone and told me that her father told her that they were moving to Chicago.**

## First Love

My first love, he was one of my first real boyfriends. He is the father of my baby. I met him when I was only fourteen. Three years later, we are about to have a child together and embark on a whole new life. I know I love him because he helped me to learn to love myself. He knows me better than anyone, accepts me and my flaws, and still loves me for them.

We love our families. We have spent months and months apart, and stayed faithful to our relationship. We learned so much about life together and overcome so many obstacles to be together. He is special to me because we have shared so much of our lives together and learned so much from each other. I am glad I have someone like him in my life.

**-Jillian, San Luis Obispo**

**From The Beat:** We're happy you have somebody you can love and trust like that, everybody should have that kind of relationship — whether it's with a mother, friend, or boyfriend. Tell us what you see in your future with your boyfriend and baby. What kind of life do you hope to provide your baby, and what values will you teach it? How are you gonna stay on the outs so you can be there for your family?

## Being Scared

The most scared I have ever been was the night I found out that my grandpa died. I was scared because he was the one who raised me and protected me. So when I found out that he died, I didn't know how the rest of my life was gonna be like, or if it would even last through the night and it almost didn't.

But I know he wouldn't want that, and even though he is gone, I still have the rest of my family to take care of, and be with, until my last day. And even more than that, I have a little brother and sister who look up to me and I don't have the right to deprive them of that.

**-David, San Luis Obispo**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry, David. It sounds like you had a great grandpa. How did you end up dealing with the loss? Did you talk about it, write about it, cry about it? We hope you were able to take care of your personal needs and not just take on the responsibility of the rest of your family.

## THIS GIRL

My first love would be with this girl. She was so beautiful. She was in my science class. She was Filipino, her hair was long and black, perfect tan skin, and she had the most gorgeous eyes ever. Every day when she would walk into the classroom I froze because I didn't want to do anything stupid.

Then, I stepped up and talked to her. Then we started writing each other notes, then we would start talking on the phone, and then a couple weeks later I asked her to go out with me and she said yes. Wow — I was so happy!

I went out and bought her a rose with a red bear. She loved it. My girl and I did everything together — we went to school, football games, and we went to the mall and if we had time after school, we went to the movies.

Just when everything was going peachy, she called me up on the phone and told me that her father told her that they were moving to Chicago. I was so crushed. She left two days later and about two weeks later she called me on the phone. She told me she was sorry she didn't say goodbye, and I told her it was okay. After that phone call, she and I are still best friends. She calls me when I'm at home and writes too! I really miss her, but hey — at least I didn't lose a good friend.

**-Vanchanco, Maricopa SEF, Arizona**

**From The Beat:** You have a great heart — we can tell by how much you care for this young woman and how you are comfortable with expressing your feelings. How can you put as much effort as you did in this relationship into working on yourself, into making sure that when you get out you stay out?





## I FEEL

I feel bad that I'm back in here  
I feel sad that I can't be out there  
I feel angry that my little sister can't see me  
I feel depressed that I won't be free  
Won't be free until I turn eighteen  
I feel good and confident that I will pass my GED  
I can't promise to stop smoking weed  
I can promise that for the rest of my life I'll be free!  
Free from the system  
Free from probation  
Free to go where I want to be  
Without incarceration time haunting my dreams  
And like my teacher once said,  
"I can fly, in the sky, way up high  
Like a kite, like a bird, I'm the guy  
Like a tree, from the sea, to the sky  
And at the end of the day, I'm free!"

**-Wallaby, Marin**

*From The Beat: Your teacher's right — you can fly. You just can't fly from being high from smoking weed, but you can get high from life! Also, "If you reach for the skies — you're bound to catch a star!" Meaning if you aim high, you will achieve great things. But if you aim low then your achievements won't be great. Ya dig?*

## SOME WEAK SYSTEM

All of these people  
Trying to get the best of me  
I'm too quick to figure out the math  
That way no one chooses my path  
So just eat and relax  
Just be quick and go find opportunity  
To make life how you always saw it  
If you at least try to reach for the stars  
Ya might get far  
Don't ever give a damn about some weak system  
Just listen and trick 'em  
And you will soon beat them  
Before you know it  
Even though you might have  
Nothin' to show for it  
Always do for it  
Stay wit' a trick up your sleeve  
Put them to a hard test  
So they'll never catch the best

**-Gata, Marin**

*From The Beat: You have an independent attitude, but what is your life like without trying to thwart people trying to get the best of you? What are you doing with your life that has nothing to do with anyone else? Are you going to school? Working at a part-time job? Living with your family? Hanging with your friends? What in your life means the most to you on the outs? You're obviously self-assured. Who else are you?*

**Put them  
to a hard test  
So they'll never  
catch the best**

## HOME SWEET HOME

Home is a place where you feel comfortable. It's where your loved ones are. It is where you are loved. You know where home is because you feel you belong. This detention center is not my home. I am forced to stay here. I don't love anyone here, no one loves me here. I know I don't belong here because I see all the different people that I don't like, know, or care about. Not that I don't like them but they are not my loved ones. Who I care about so home is where you are happy and comfortable.

One day when I was at home me and my family were coming back home from a restaurant. And my brother was really excited because he just got out of jail. My brother spent two years in jail altogether, so he was happy to come home. He is not a criminal but he did stupid things when he was a kid.

Anyways, my mom and I were really happy to be with him. So when we got home, we all watched a movie and talked. That's what I see as loved ones. We were altogether though, so it didn't matter how or where we called home it's that we were comfortable and happy who we were with. This may not sound like an identification of home but home is in your mind also, it doesn't have to be in a physical place. It can also be mental.

I love you mom and Michael!!

**-Jacob, Maricopa SEF, Arizona**

*From The Beat: We think your definition of home is right on point. And we are aware of the fact that home may not even be with your family. For sometimes living with your family isn't comfortable, or they don't make you feel like you belong. So then what would someone do? If home doesn't feel like home, what should one do to make their homes feel like home? You've been blessed to have a family that understands you, and supports you regardless of what the situation is. We know people that don't have the same blessings as you.*

## The Phone Call

The first phone call I made was to my mother and told her I'm being locked up for another dope case and I'm probably going to be locked up for a while.

That hurt my feelings when I had to tell her. I wish I never have to go through that again.

Mom I love you. I don't ever want to put you through that again.

**-Cold G, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Man, Cold G, we feel ya'. Nothing is worse than disappointing your mama. You may be locked up for a while, but this can be a good learning experience. What if you had a son, who kept going to the Hall? What would you tell him? What could he do that would make you proud of him? You are a smart cat. Give yourself some advice, and take it.*

## INSPIRED

You say you want me to get inspired  
I came in here, fool, only if I can get even higher  
Than before  
I wouldn't sit lonely looking at the floor  
Not understanding  
Feeling lost and unaware  
Shhh, I know you don't care  
Can't wait 'til I'm feeling found  
When will that day come around?  
I stay cautious

**-Gata, Marin**

*From The Beat: Maybe staying cautious is the wisest plan for you for now. Who do you want to find you? Have you heard from your family? Do you have positive friends and/or a boyfriend on the outs? How are you planning for a productive life on the outs? Have you finished high school? Do you want to go to college? We hope so! With a mind and imagination like yours, you should definitely go to college!*



## The Phone Call

I called my house because my girl can wait. I told my dad I was locked up and he didn't really care but I expected to talk to my sister, but she wasn't there.

My house don't accept collect calls so I can't get through, but I don't deserve contact with my family anyways.

**-Lil' Ant, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Why do you feel that you don't deserve to be in contact with your family? Everyone needs to be around loved ones. Keep your head up Ant!*

## MOM

I'm sorry for lying

Now when I think about you

I can slowly feel my heart dying

Just a month ago the judge let me go

But when it came to school I was a no-show

I told you things were going to change

And now I go to court draggin' those chains

Now I'm changing forever and using my brains

I wish for you to forgive

'Cause we both have a lot of life to live

We need to stop arguing

Instead we should start bar-b-q-ing

I hope I can have one last chance at home

'Cause that the only place I wish to roam

(This poem is for my mom, the most important woman in my life. I can never say sorry enough times. I love you, Mom.)

**-Random, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: It's sad to read the problems that young people have with their mothers that fill them — as we can feel in your wonderful poetic apology — with regrets and wishing to change the past. But it's also uplifting to read a youngster's expression of love for his mother, the person who has sacrificed so much for you. We hope your mom gets to read your words, because we know they will mean a lot to her.*

## The System Owes Me

If a person blames you  
for a crime you didn't do,  
they snatch you up  
with out hearing your side.

From that point on, you're in  
the system

that is messed up,  
isn't it?

I can't get a job the way I look with  
braids and gold teeth.

**-Joe, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Okay Joe, so, being blamed for a crime you didn't commit is messed up. But what do you feel the system owes you? If you can't get a job with gold teeth and braids, then what is the logical decision? You probably have to ask yourself, which is more important, a job or gold teeth and braids.*

## I Knew I Shoulda Let Her

Verse 1:

I knew I shoulda let her just keepin on walking by. Should of never listened to my eyes telling me she's the finest thang. Can't let that get away I had to holler got her number same night, I was making good love to her even though it was a one-night stand. Now she's calling me telling me she's pregnant.

Chorus:

I denied it, but the baby just might be mine. If it's mine, I won't deny it. But I knew I should of let her pass me by. (repeat two times)

Verse 2:

Got's to be more careful stressin' off the spot that I might be responsible. On the phone with mama in a deep frustration. Talking about listen to preacher 'cause God is on a passion, oh no, have mercy on me. I barely knew this girl. If the child is mine, then what kind of mother she gone be?

Chorus:

I denied it, but the baby just might be mine. If it's mine, I won't deny it. But I knew I should of let her pass me by. (repeat two times)

**-Anthony, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This is a powerful flow. There are a lot of folks out there that can relate to this scenario. Is this something you've been through? What do you think is the best way to handle this situation? Does it make you think about being more careful about one-night stands? This is definitely a reality check for people who don't think about the consequences of their actions.*

## Moving To Fast

My name is Lay-Lay, and I been locked up for a few months. I went to CYA for ninety days.

I'm in here stressing not knowing what is about to happen to me. All I did was run from camp. I ain't caught no case since 2001. The judge ain't trying to send me home. I think I ain't got out yet because I'm funkking, and there's a lot of people out there that I'm funkking with. I might end up dead.

So while I'm in my room all I do is think about what I did to get here and what I got to do when I get out to prevent coming back. I also think of all the good times when was out I was out there flipping scrappers. Bussing that thang, funkking hard and getting money.

Basically I was moving too fast, but I had ten months to think about it and when I get out I'm gone be a lot sharper, on point.

**-Lay-Lay, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Lay-Lay, there is a lot of folks out there that can relate to what you're saying. It's not good to be funkking with so many. Think, Think, Think! That is the best way you can do your time. It can save your life on the outs. You going to have to make some better decisions. Slow down.*

## WHY DID I DO IT?

I lie down and close my eyes,

Thinking to myself and wondering why.

Why am I locked behind these walls?

Was it because I did not use my head on the streets?

Or was it because I did not listen to my girl when she said stay in the house wit' me?

Was it because I had to get out there and grind to have the best clothes?

And shoes on my feet?

Or maybe because I did not want my dad to tell me nothing.

Now that I'm gone, I wish I would have sat down,

And heard a word, real quick.

It might be the fact that I was rolling at all times,

Maybe because I did not stay at school all that day,

Or maybe because I did not hear my potnas say,

T- Maine, let's go to the mall and get away.

Well all I can do is guess what it was,

'Cause I don't know.

**-Tramaine, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You are a smart guy. Why you did what you did, is a good question. What kind of answer are you looking for? Something or someone to blame? Is there an answer? Do you think that the reason is something that you can control? Searching for answers is always a good thing. But, once you find your answer, then what?*



## Payback

It was a quiet night,  
When a ranfla hit the block,  
Fools hanging out,  
Next thing I knew I was shot!  
Down I fell,  
It seemed like it was all a dream,  
All I kept hearing was homeboys scream,  
"Get up homie... don't die"  
He kept saying,  
I tried to get up,  
But in his arms I kept layin'  
From ashes to ashes and dust to dust,  
It's pay back time and in  
my homeboys I trust.

**-Joker, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Joker, your writing is getting really good, yet your thoughts of payback is frightening, given that you are only adding fuel to the fire. Tit for tat will never end, if we continue to think and work this way - You get ours we'll get yours. Is this a true story? We look forward to reading your writings every week. Take it to the next level; take us on a longer journey as a teacher. We look forward to reading your next piece.*

## El Sistema Es Racista

En mi opinión el sistema es racista. Se aprovecha de mí porque soy Hispano, porque no sé hablar Inglés y porque no soy un ciudadano como lo son ellos. No me importa lo que piensen de mí porque mi meta es salir adelante cada día con esta injusticia de la vida. Sólo me queda aceptar lo que digan ellos y esperar impasientemente que llegue mi día de libertad. Sólo me queda decirles a los demás carnales Hispanos que no se aguiten por nada del sistema y que le hechen ganas a salir adelante. Recueden la vida sigue y en cualquier momento estaran libres.

*From The Beat: Te agradecemos tu ganas de motibar a los demás. Nunca hay que dejar que nadie nos ponga abajo, por eso es que debemos de tratar de estar en el mismo nivel que ellos, que todos y no hacer cosas para que no pienses cosas malas de nuestra gente. Y también queremos decirte que vas bien y que siempre deberias de estar fuerte de espiritu.*

## The System Is Racist

In my opinion, the system is racist. It takes advantage of me because I am Hispanic because I do not know how to speak English, and because I am not a citizen like they are.

I don't care what they think about me because my goal is to come out on top everyday, regardless of the injustice that I face in my life. The only thing that I have left is to accept what they say and impatiently wait for the day I get released.

Also, the other thing left for me to do is tell the rest of my Hispanic brothers to not get down because of anything that the system does to them, and to put forth effort on moving forwards and not looking back. Remember that life continues and in any moment know they'll be free.

**-Chiqui B5, SF/YGC**

## Los Que Dicen Ser Tu Amigos

Que onda Beat, soy el homie Chino del Rancho. Mi tema es sobre los vatos que dicen que son tus amigos. Quiero decirles que esos vatos son puro verbos, por eso trucha si rifas porque tus homboys te van a traicionar. De verdad, no es un sueño. Yo sou un pandillero y siempre ando trucha.

Yo soy un pandillero y no confio en los vatos del barrio porque andaban de chismosos hablando tonteras de mí durante mi ausencia. Los vatos con que me torcieron me hecharon la culpa. Hice mi crimen y me hice culpable, pero el homies con quien me terciaron me hecho toda la culpa cuando los dos hicimos todo. Por eso, amigos les digo que se despierten de este sueño, tus amigos te vna a traicionar. Con esto no quiero decir que todos son malos, también hay amigos de verdad, pero tienes que conocerlos.

*From The Beat: Gracias por habernos dado tus pensamientos sobre lo que son los amigos que no te lleban a nada. La verdad es que aqui en esta vida, hay que ver quienes son las personas que te llebaran a lo bueno. Esperamos que estas personas te pongan atención y no hagan lo mismo por lo que estas pasando en estos momentos.*

## The Ones Who Pretend To Be Your Friends

What's up Beat? It's me, the homie Chino from the Ranch. The subject that I am going to be writing about is on fools who say they're your friends, but really they're not. I want to say right now that those fools are completely fake fools. That's why watch your own back if you bang, because your homeboys are going to betray you. That's for real; it's not a dream. I'm a gangster and I am always watching my back.

I am a gangster and I don't trust the fools from the 'hood because they were going around acting like females chopping you up while you're absent. The fools that I got wrapped up with placed the blame on me. I did my crime and I admitted to it, but the homies that I got wrapped up with placed all the blame on me when we're all in it together.

That's why, friends, I'm telling you to wake up from this dream. Your friends are going to betray you. With that said, I'm not saying that all of your friends are evil. There are also homies who are true homies, but you have to know who they really are.

**-Chino, LCRS**

## No Hagan Toneras

Hola le estoy escribiendo del B4 para decirles que no se aguiten, que mantengan la frente en alto, porque o si no hay vatos que te quieren tener abajo. Tienes que estar trucha y todos nosotros tenemos que estar unidos aunque. A veces me tiro tiros con mis homies para que se pongan trucha porque muchas veces ellos estan haciendo pendejadas que no deberían de estar haciendo, pero ni modo todavía somos homies. Les quiero decir que no se anden peleando con los homies tanto, quiero que todos estemos unidos porque la unión hace la fuerza.

*From The Beat: Creemos que está bien que le llares la atención a tus amigos cuando esten haciendo tonteras pero no estamos deacuerdo que esa sea la mejor forma como enfrentar las cosas, como hacerles ver que estan mal. Pero nos da gusto que hayas visto este error y que ahora des consejo a los demás de lo que no deben hacer. Asi es amigo, la union hace la fuerza, siempre arriba!*

## Don't Do Stupid Stuff

Hello, I'm writing to you from B4 to tell you not to get sad, to keep your heads up because if you don't, it'll be easy for others to bring you down.

You have to watch your back at all times and all of us should be united regardless of what 'hood we bang. Sometimes I have to go at it with my homies so they can put their guards up because they're usually doing dumb things with their time that they should not be doing, but regardless if we got at it, we're still homies.

I want to tell y'all to not go around fighting with the homies so much. I want all of us to be united because there's strength in numbers.

**-No Name B4, SF/YGC**





## ME SIENTO TRANQUILO AQUI

Hola me llamo Pedro y me siento bien porque me tratan bien los staff y porque me doy a llevar con los otros detenidos. Los staff me tratan bien porque no les doy tanta lata y me he ganado la confianza de todos los que estan aqui. Pero aún me siento un poco desesperado porque me dijeron que me van a deportar pero no se cuando lo haran. Por eso me preocupo. Yo quiero salir de aqui y no me importa donde me manden lo único que quiero es salir de aqui.

**From The Beat:** Nos da mucho gusto que estes haciendo tu tiempo y que te estes portando bien. Esperamos que continues portandote bien y que siempre sigas portandote bien. Hey, fue buena cosa haberte ganado la confianza de los demás verdad.

## I FEEL IN PEACE IN HERE

Hi mi name is Pedro and I feel good in here because the staff treats me well and because I get along with the rest of the inmates.

The staffs treat me well because I don't give them any kind of trouble and I've gained the trust of all the people in here. But I still feel desperate because they told me they were going to deport me and I don't know when they are going to do so, that's why I worry. I want to get out of here not mattering where they send me, the only thing I want is to get out of here.

**-Pedro Santa Cruz**

## Being Gay Is Okay

You want to deny me of all my rights because girls are my sexual preference. But that's okay, because I know I'm gay and that means I am happy.

Forget what you think, you're homophobic. So what if I like milk shakes it's my prerogative, I can do who I want to. If I come at you in a gay way you can say it's not okay.

But I'll tell them "No, I won't like men," but you can treat me equal. Freedom gave me that right didn't it?

On the inside, I know who I am. I don't need you to tell me.

Okay I am gay but I am also human, treating me like shhh isn't the only thing you do. You listen to what others say, instead of what I tell you. Because I am gay, is it not true? Or are you too straight to listen?

What if I turned the tables on you, and treated you like shhh because you're not gay? It's not okay for you to be around me, but I am not like that. I am caring because God make this world for us to be sharing.

So I say today, that it's okay. Hell, if you want to be gay, be gay. Because being gay is okay.

**-Lil' Fairfax, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You go! It's Okay. We are all people, same potential to love others and function as part of this society. If someone has a problem loving you for what you are, then there is something dysfunctional about him or her. Be yourself. You're okay with us. Keep your head up!

## A Few Words Of Encouragement to Twin

I read your poem, and I want you to know that this isn't the end of the world and it always seems like it gets worst before it gets better. But you gotta remember the glorious days are yet to come.

I know how it feels to have your feelings hurt, so don't think you're the only victim that's hurting. Besides, there is more to life then just sitting around putting yourself down and your female should be woman enough to hold you down and not spin-off when you get wrapped up. So I suggest you do it moving.

You can do better, and you do have a future. You just gotta stop underestimating yourself and learn how to overcome your obstacles.

Keep your head up.

**-Bt, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Bt, those are really nice words. You speak loud and clear, with good advice. You are a strong woman. Hopefully your advice will reach many who need it.

## I FEEL LIKE STARTING OVER AGAIN.

I sit in my cell,  
I feel lonely as hell,  
Sadness fills my thoughts,  
Drugs fill my mind.  
I can't shake this everlasting fear,  
Of spending the rest of my days,  
In here.

**-Ashley, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** This poem flows really nicely. Writing is one of the best ways to let out your feelings. You feel lonely, sad and afraid. What makes you feel comfort, happiness or joy? You may be locked up in the Hall right now, but its not forever. Tell us about some of your good memories, or tell us about all the great things you're going to do when you get out.

## Me Gusta Algunas Cosas De La Juvenile

Me gusta algunas cosas de la juvenile porque tiene deportes que me encantan. El domingo fuimos a center a practicar a como bailar y ahora todos los domingos vamos a ir a aprender a como bailar. La verdad es que me gustó porque nunca en mi vida había tratado de bailar música en Inglés.

Estas dos semanas que me quedan voy astar illendo para seguir aprendiendo a como bailar música en Inglés. Pienso que cuando salga de aquí voy a terminar mi escuela, graduarme, ir al colegio y tomar classes de bailar. También quiero tomar clases para ser un cosmetólogo. Tengo muchas cosas en mi cabeza para cuando salga de aquí

**From The Beat:** que bien que pienses de esta manera. Consideramos que deberias de seguir adelante en aprender cosas que te ayudaran en tu vida, tu futuro. Que sabemos, tal vez y llegues a ser bailarín profesional o un cosmetólogo, se hace un buen dinero en esta cosas.

## I Like Some Thing From Juvenile Hall

I like some things about Juvenile Hall because it has sports I like. Last Sunday we went to a recreational center and practiced how to dance. Now we are going to go every Sunday to practice and learn how to dance. The truth is that I like it because I've never tried to dance to English music before.

In the last two weeks I have left, I'm going to continue going learning how to dance to music in English. I think when I get out I'm going to finish my school, graduate, go to college, and take dancing classes. I also want to become a cosmetologist. I have a lot of things in my head to do when I get out.

**-Erika, San Luis Obispo**



## MY LIFE

Got me under this jail  
My life got me raising hell  
My life is like a puzzle that  
Never, got put together  
My life is like the stormy weather  
My life is full of pain  
My life is full of shame  
My life is like a game and I lost  
My life is like things that cost  
My life is unexplainable  
My life is like a picture frame that broke  
My life is me drowning and me starting to choke  
My life made me laugh like a funny joke  
My life is me falling asleep and not being woke  
My life is like a homeless man without a coat  
My life is the tears that falls from my eyes  
My life is like me being hypnotized  
My life is me breathing, but not being alive

**-Vaniesha, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Your life is many, many things. When people say that your life is what you make it, they are talking about what you decide to focus on makes you who you are. You could probably write a more than a million lines about your life. What part do you focus on? Your life is like a seed. So much potential to blossom into a beautiful flower, if taken care of. But, still has potential to dry-up. What will you make of your life?*

## Brown Sugar

Brown Sugar is what you call me  
When I met you  
You had on a white t-shirt, blue jeans and Nikes  
You looked good and  
Your sign was a Pisces and  
When your song came on you got huffy  
And you wanted me to be your wifey  
And I asked you  
"Is that right?"  
You called me and we stayed  
On the phone all night  
"Brown sugar..." you said  
"come lay with me in this bed"  
I said "Baby I love you, instead."  
Your eyes, your lips and your body  
Had me ready to party I had to stop  
Before I became naughty  
Brown sugar, Brown sugar  
Brown sugar, your look don't  
Get no better  
That's what  
He said before we went to bed.

**-Vaniesha, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Sometimes those late night conversations can really take us to a lovely place before we sleep. We appreciate you sharing this memory with us, Brown Sugar. We hope you continue to show yourself respect*

## Worst Experience

Most people that been through jail get their worst experience from there, from getting rape, depression and beat really bad. They know they could turn juvenile into a really good educational program but it ain't gonna happen.

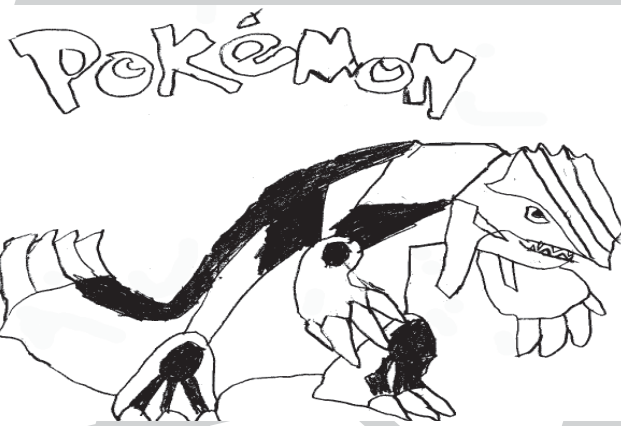
What jail do to you is make you lazy and crazy. I could feel my mind thinking different. Jail is like when you take a' animal and put it in a cage and feed it, from birds, lions, hamsters, any animal — and say for two years. Then when you release them back to the wild they would not survive or have a hard time.

Just like them animals in a zoo or a pet shop, they would have a hard time getting away from being eaten and searching for water/food. That's how it is for us mentally. We would be in jail longer than two years — it would be hard to get a job with no skills or education.

**-Larry, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Wow! That is very perceptive of you to make the comparison of an animal and a person's adaptation to institutionalization. When you touch down or even while you are incarcerated, how can you take it upon yourself to work the resources in your community to get those skills and education? Money is not always necessary to progress, there is financial aide, and some places will pay you to train you in a profession. Real long lasting success is not about immediate bling bling, you got to work your butt off and be humble but it's worth it in the end.*

**How can he take  
care of his kids  
like a real man  
if you never  
teach him?**



## THE BLACK MAN

How many times will they tell us that we ain't never going to be anything?

Then when that happens, we say it's the white man.

How many years have we been saying that?

You see, we as a people need to be stronger and teach the little boy in the family how to be a man and stay with ya baby boy.

'Cause a woman can only do so much

but when it's time for the boy to grow up and take care of his family that's where the man's job is.

How can he take care of his kids like a real man if you never teach him?

So the next some thing that happens to you

don't say it's the white man

say it's the black man.

**-D-Moe, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: That's a different tune. We like it because it means you take responsibility over yourself and your affect on your community. It's true that the years of slavery in the past and still in some ways in the present affect us. But do we learn from it, rise and fight for our right to be happy, healthy and free or do we use it as an excuse to be miserable, hood-sick and incarcerated? You seem like you are not giving up on yourself and will not let yourself be labeled as just another lost "brotha." How will you "fight"?*



## I Owe Myself

I think the system doesn't owe me anything,  
I owe myself actually,  
to change and to know the difference between right and wrong.  
I think the system owes every person a fair trial.  
The government and the system owe everyone an opportunity to  
change and rehabilitate themselves.  
Teachers owe each student the right to learn,  
and teachers owe each student the  
opportunity to explore their mind.  
I think the police officers owed me to tell me the truth when I  
got arrested.  
My PO owes me a chance to explain myself to her,  
instead she says "I'm not going to show you sympathy."  
My family is now part of the system because I dragged them into  
this horrible system.

-Abbas, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** Nice recognition of your responsibility to yourself. You are right to also mention what the judicial and educational system owes a child or teen. Those systems have been failing many people. With this knowledge, does it make you inclined to help others in the future as a profession? To vote? Why do you think your PO is like this? Can you iron out your relationship with her? It must hurt to have your family in this. In time it will get easier for them and hopefully you too.

## I AM A CHILD OF THE STREET

I am a child of the street  
I'll never show nor give defeat  
I'll stay up on my feet  
Even though I'll fall someday  
I'll keep on getting up 'cause that's my way.  
With my piece on the side of me,  
I'm ready to dump  
Especially during funk  
My feelings visualize a demon  
One I can't control  
But now I'm in the hall  
Man, ain't that some shhh  
I feel like I've been played  
I feel like getting laid  
I feel like getting paid  
I need to take control  
Gotta stay up out the hall  
Once I get out I'll be a ball  
But then I'll run into the struggle  
Of getting money  
But instead turns into trouble  
Then there I go back to the hall  
Because I lost all my control  
Next thing you know I take the fall  
But there's no worry  
'Cause I will be out in a matter of time  
Then I will work harder for the nickel and dime  
So the cycle continues,  
For a G living in these streets  
Gangbanging to the fullest.

-Lil' Jose, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** This is powerful because you spit your reality and also write how crazy it is and explain the difficulties. Many gangbangers just write about the so-called fun and how hard they are. We appreciate you taking it further and for your honesty. Making money and being surrounded by this life seems to be where it all started but you continue it knowing all the consequences. Will it end with you incarcerated for life, and for what? The streets seem to be like family to you but a real family has love. Real love does not destroy. No disrespect but if this is your decision, be ready to live with shady men for the rest of your life in the pen or be like those other children of the streets who switch things up and live a truly happy and healthy life.

## That Phone Call

Me: What's up  
Her: Who is this?  
Me: C'mon, who you think?  
Her: Where you at?  
Me: That place again with the rooms wit' toilets and sinks.  
Her: Yeah right that April Fools joke been hella old.  
Me: Naw, I'm fa real and got dawg'd by 5-0.  
Her: Stop playin'.  
Me: Is you listenin' to what I'm sayin'? This time it look bad. We gotta do a lot of prayin'.  
Her: I'm 'bout to call my mama right now and see.  
Me: Oh yeah, I just talked to her.  
Her: I'm 'bout to call on a three.  
Phone: Ring... Ring.  
Moms: Hello?  
Her: Aye, mama it's me.  
Me: Tell her I'm in jail this Dolla D.  
Moms: He locked up.  
Her: Naw couldn't be.  
Me: Told you this wasn't a joke. Luckily it wasn't tha night when they caught me, I could of got smok'd.  
Her: Don't say that.  
Me: you already know. Remember last year in the station, had me all by the throat.  
Her: Don't be all stressin'.  
Me: Yeah, I'll try, tell ya brothers to view my mistakes, hopefully they'll learn a lesson.  
Her: But when you gon' learn yours?  
Me: After God win' against Satan in my soul war.

-Dolla Deesa, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** What a creative way to take us there to that phone call. Was this "her" a sister or friend? She sounds like a really good one. We can see how you would think her brothers may learn from your mistakes but don't you think it's the opposite and they will want to follow in your footsteps? There is a struggle within everyone — with their shadow self and their "good" self. It may not be about one winning and the other losing but about knowing how to express that shadow self in a way that is not destructive to you or others. Your writing could be your number one too. Remember you got more control than you think and if you don't have all that it takes to be disciplined and control your urges than don't be too proud to learn.

## My feelings visualize a demon One I can't control

### NO CALL

I did not call anybody once I step' into the prison system.  
My life was taken from me in front of my very eyes.  
I put down the boyish good looks and turned into a rugged  
old man.  
I grew up — let the bull shhh go.  
I grew up by myself...  
It' been six months now and I'm still alone.  
I've done it all  
Nobody but myself for a wake-up call to reality.

-Jeremy, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** It's a bit more difficult without supportive family there to call whenever you need them but you are an intelligent and independent person. Remember don't use your intelligence to justify negative behavior. Make some rules for yourself, some values, some agreements... Do whatever it takes to make it out there legit, calm and scandalous free.





## Sarkastix And Tishay's Page

### *Loved One*

Why did you leave?  
When you're still here  
Here in spirit  
And never leaving  
You were my brother, my cousin, and my loved one  
And now you're oblivious passed on by the living  
Forever with me  
In my heart  
Even though we barely knew each other  
I know your story  
Your legacy will be learned  
No matter how great the struggle  
I'll fight for you  
And we'll come out on top  
So don't trip  
Kick back relax and enjoy your time  
Soon we'll be together  
But for now you're my spirit  
We love you.

**-Sarkastix, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Sarkastix, It's really refreshing to hear about your love for your brother/cousin. What do you know about this special person? We want to know his legacy. Share with all The Beat readers, and us what you know about this person. Touching piece.*

**he left me with  
no care  
and i was no  
longer his child  
with my tears**

### **I DON'T REGRET IT**

he took my heart  
and held it with care  
for awhile  
he helped me out  
then he lost track  
and started to go wild  
he left me with no care  
and i was no longer his child  
with my tears  
as strong as a river  
and the pain  
as cold as winter  
i do remember how it was  
i will never forget it  
my precious heart  
another man  
will never get it  
but i do not regret it

**-Tishay, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This poem says so much in so few words, and the rhymes are tight — like "tears as strong as a river" and "pain as cold as winter"! Or how he "started to go wild" till you were "no longer his child"! Each rhyming line speaks volumes about the love you'll never forget nor ever regret in heart or mind.*

### **MY POINT OF VIEW**

i don't like it when people  
go shady  
it's not the time for it  
we going through too much  
already  
we cannot afford it  
don't tell me lies  
'cause it causes neglect  
and it's something i just can't  
accept  
(it makes me wanna  
break ya neck)  
we play fair and you don't  
(so) what makes you think  
you'll win and we won't  
why sit and tell me  
what you going to do  
i put my words in actions  
i really don't listen to you  
how come you can't understand  
more than  
just you  
you should try to  
look at it from  
my point of view

**-Tishay, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Sometimes all you can do is point the way, and if people refuse to see — what else can you say? And if they choose to misunderstand, twisting everything till it's all about them — what else can you do? Just as you recommend: don't even listen to them but let your positive actions shine through, young friend.*

### **THE STUFF WE LEARN**

Look here lil' brotha  
No, I don't know what  
What the heck you were thinkin'  
When you did that  
But dang! you should have listened  
I know you heard us  
We were calling out to you  
But why didn't you answer  
We were all that you needed  
But you couldn't wait  
But don't trip  
We still love you  
So now you've learned your lesson  
One love.

**-Sarkastix, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Most of the time the best lessons are learned from our own mistakes. Which you so clearly illustrated here. This is a short, but sweet piece, written beautifully.*

### **Hey!**

Pick on little people  
'Cause you think you can't be touched  
But there's always someone else  
And it only takes so much  
Until it's a wrap  
And it's on at first sight  
Emotions start flaring  
And it's far from a fight  
Well I'm that someone else  
And I really don't care  
So try your luck if you want to  
Start with me if you dare  
'Cause I don't play  
I quit school 'cause of recess  
And if yo ass jump stupid  
Only God knows the rest

**-Sarkastix, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You drop another bomb on us, damn! We want to know more. What do you mean YOU don't play? Is this piece addressed to someone in particular? Why do you not play? What kind of things are so serious, they are not to be played with?*

### **TRYING TO HIDE**

The steam in the shower  
Hot and heavy  
Can't hide the fumes  
Of hell steamin' off me  
Dang the devil  
Why must you torment me?  
Trying to bring me down  
With your temptation  
But check this out  
I refuse to be brought down  
You try to strip me of everything  
But you clothe me in God's love  
I just want you to know one thing  
I'm rubber and you're glue  
Whatever you do sticks back on you.

**-Sarkastix, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This piece is pretty funny. You really bring a little humor to this serious struggle. You are a strong cat. We don't think you need to hide. You're too strong for that. Stand up!*



## My Life

My life is crazy. Shhh, the reason I'm sayin' is 'cause there's a lot of stuff goin' on in it that I don't think should, but I try my best not to stress and be negative about it. I learn to accept it, 'cause that's not gon' do nothing but make me stronger in the end.

My life is crazy. I'm just a young man with all this responsibility on my hands, and I'm forced to make it better for myself. My life is also hard, it's hard to live everyday knowin' I'm just 17 years of age, wit' a baby boy to take care of, and knowin' that ain't nobody gon' do it for me. My life is crazy 'cause no matter how much I wanna, and need to change my life around to positive, I need to feed my lil' one, myself, and my wifey, so a ninja forced to do what I gotta.

But through all I go through, I just keep my faith in my heavenly father he gone pull me through whatever, I just got to pray and believe. I love myself.

**-Dante, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Yes, you are young and have plenty of responsibilities but you can't say you're forced to do what you gotta. The only thing you gotta do — is your time. You're 17 already, which means you gotta man up to being an adult soon. Get a job and start saving money so your child doesn't have to struggle the way you did. Your "presence" is more important than your "presents." God can only guide you, so in the end you have to help yourself. Get on it!

## Dante And Janitor's Page

### JUST ANOTHER DAY

One more day. This shhh stressin' me out, the staff, the food. Just not havin' my freedom is makin' me hella mad, period.

I'm ready to get up and out this place for good. I'm goin' through too much drama as it is in my own life, then on top of that I got this shhh to deal wit', and to keep it real, this shhh ain't even fair. I'm stressing hella much, I'm mad at myself, and the world, and it ain't shhh my ass can do about it.

I pray to God, and read my bible everyday — and my heavenly father ain't blessed me to get out this place. I'm getting impatient. I cant relieve my stress if you know what I mean, can't go and come as I please, and on top of that I got to act like every damn thang is all good.

Man, I'm tired of actin'. This shhh drivin' me nuts. And if I make a mistake, I'm just gone be in here more time than I was supposed to. Won't Camp just come and get me out this hell cell. Shhh, I can't even handle this so I know I ain't gon' be able to handle CYA. That's why I'm finna handle my business at Camp so I won't dig myself a deeper hole than I'm in right now.

So to everybody who got time to serve just handle that shhh like a real young man, 'cause sooner or later the white man gone get they time out of you, that's no lie.

**-Dante, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You can't keep blaming everything that happens on the white man. You have to take responsibility. The white man didn't put you in Juvenile Hall — your actions did. You said it right when you talked about handling your business so you don't dig yourself a deeper hole than you are already in. What do you need to change in your life so that you can find a way out of the system and into success?

### Britney Spears Is the Hottest

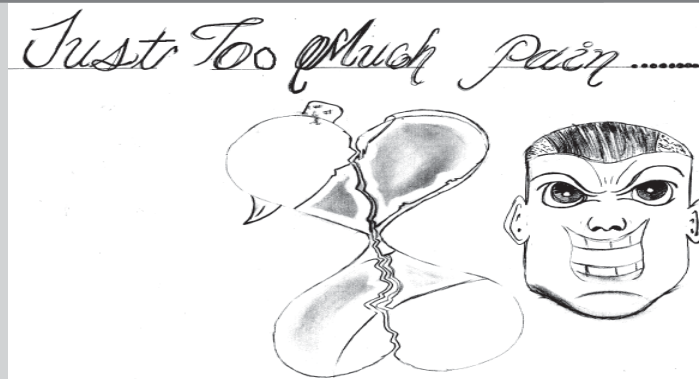
You read my list of top three female performing artists, but I have to say that I think Britney Spears is the hottest! She can sing and dance; she has style; and she has an unbelievable body. Plus she's a good actor.

She puts on the best shows ever! But a lot of people be hating on her, because they know she has it all. Britney is still on top in my book! And I know she knows that she's the best, because she don't let all these people that are talking about her affect her life.

Britney is fly, and you know it! Don't hate because a white girl has flavor — and she has it all! You know deep down in your head, she's fly! All of the superstars know that Britney Spears is the next Madonna — even you know that!

**-Junior, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Britney Spears does seem to be the pop goddess par excellence! Her live shows and videos are spectacular. Still, J-Lo's a better actress, don't you think? But hey, Britney's come a long way from the Mouseketeers, okay! Thanks for your enthusiastic piece. We're sure others will want to weigh in on this hot topic.



## My Three Favorite Female Performers In the Music Business

One: Britney Spears! I think she's a great dancer, and she puts on the best shows ever! She can act and she's got style! Plus she has a great personality to go with a wonderful body!

Two: Beyonce Knowles! She's a great singer! And she can act well, too! Plus she has great style!

Three: Janet Jackson! She's like Britney Spears 'cause she has it all, too! She has style and body, too! She can do it all, from acting to performing live!

**-Junior, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Those are three mega-talented ladies. Janet showed the complete package! Then Britney Spears came along to reign as the queen of the young music-world divas. Now it's Beyonce on stage, screen and television, showing her dynamism!

**Janet Jackson! She's like Britney Spears  
'cause she has it all**



## Boog Money And Lil Rocky's Page

### *A Youngsta Doin' Grown Thangs*

I wasn't never like somebody influenced me to act a certain way or do a certain thing. I did it myself my own choice. It wasn't no peer pressure that made me pop that stunna or smoke that sack or drink robo. I did it myself. Doing stuff your way wantin' stuff for yourself so you take matters into your own hands and go out there and get what you want.

I'm not saying you have to go out and rob somebody or do any crimes to get money, but if you can't get it legal what other choice do you have? Being so young you just consider yourself a man at some point in time and you start movin' faster, got to get that money faster. But you end up goin' in that fast lane where there ain't no reverse — just drive, and when you gettin' money fast like that you don't really think what's gon' happen.

When you get on that lever, where you just thinkin' money, money — you ain't worried about the consequences. You thinkin' like what's the worst that can happen — what two or three months but you don't get no time back. When you get accustomed to doing something a certain way it's kinda hard to change every event that goes on.

Being younger like 7 or 8 years old you got like a older potna or somebody out there that gettin' it wit' that fat chain or that car, and you fall short of it like, I want that car, but I don't want what he got — I want better than him, so you start to grow up and you go out there with wantin' all these items so you go get it and while you at it you get more.

Like sometimes you might feel it's yo' position to get ready for the world, you don't want yo' momma takin' care of you all yo' life so you take on yo' responsibilities. When you in the streets some people grow up faster than they grow. You might be 16 going on 21, feel me? But when you out there hustling and things start comin' fast it's like sometimes bad stuff start to happen, and like an OG told me, "your company can be your downfall" and that's what happened. But only if the judge knew what it is to not having nothing and you tryin' to get somethin' and you gettin' it the wrong way, it could be robbin' or pimpin' or grindin' but you don't mean it — you gettin' tired of tryin' and not havin' so you go and get and then you fall into the world of a youngsta doin' grown man thangs.

**-Lil' Rocky, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Do you feel that there is no other way for you? Do you think that you can learn something new? Will you always get things in the illegal way? Or do you want to always be locked away? When do you plan to get it right? We think know that materialistic shhh ain't worth your life.*

### THAT DAMN ROOM

That damn room have you thinkin'  
That damn room be hella stinkin'  
That damn room, man that damn room

That damn room began my walk  
That damn room began my talk  
That damn room, man that damn room

That damn room said to forget the smoke  
That damn room almost made me loose hope  
But it was God and not that damn room that told  
me... life begins on bouncin' ropes  
Man...that damn room

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: What kind of thoughts cross your mind while you're in your room? What can you do to make room time the time to relax and get away from the chaos? Time, such as life, is what you make it.*

### PRAISE GOD

Praise God for breathing  
Praise God for receiving  
Praise God for the Lord above for He we  
believe in.  
Praise God  
Man just praise God  
Being locked up you believe God is less  
needin'  
But being locked up you began to be more  
decievin'  
Thinking the body is weak and the mind is  
weakened  
Your backs against the wall thinking God  
directs life  
And why God chosen that terrible fall  
Praise God  
Man just praise God  
Even though the ride is ruff  
Praise God, man just praise God  
Even though the room is dark and the bugs  
Are numerous  
But raise God 'cause he makes everything  
humorous  
But praise God  
Just praise God

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Has your connection with God grown stronger since you've been in the Hall? How does God help you in your time of need? Do you read the Bible often?*

### What?

What is the question, but I wonder why it's like I'm up against the world. I have seen patnas die in front of me and get shot in front of me. Dreads dangle gold teeth twinkle but it's like, what? Why do I have to go through what I been through? I wasn't born wit' a silver spoon in my mouth and I don't blame nobody for the way I was brought up.

I'm glad I seen what I seen and been through what I been through so now I can look back and won't make that same mistake over again, now I can help my lil' potnas out to not go down that one way street with no way out. But while ninjas runnin' around callin' the hustle the pain, the struggle ain't the same. It ain't 'cause it ain't nothin' to play with. It's more than serious. But people that haven't seen something that I witnessed or my patnas witnessed would be square. I'm like my life would scare a square to death. They say this ain't a world, they don't wanna put up wit' it. It's like to them it's what, here we go again — locked up. It's like there's more guns in my hood than jobs, more jails than schools, what can we make out of that growin', up in my part of the town?

It was hard, you'll sacrifice anybody. The president, the cops, everybody they brush their shoulders off as much as they can, no jobs, just McDonalds, KFC stuff like that so you do what you gotta do to survive. It's harder than you think but when it gets to the point and time that they keep brushing their shoulders off and not doing nothin' — eventually our world becomes their would, and it's like what?

RIP John John, Dep, Nu Nu, Stacey, Mat, Anty Bo, Big Myke, Ju Ju, Cris, KB and JJ. Save me a place!

**-Lil' Rocky, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: From your words, we see that it's not easy to get by in your neck of the woods, but seriously — you ain't gotta be grimy. Do you have to play the game? What about getting a job? What about going to school? What about mom? Where does she play a part in your life? We bet she'd rather take care of you than see you in jail. You don't want to be doing this shhh when you're 30 — OG (over grown) for the game.*





## Talk To Myself

It's so hard to believe that I'm still livin', my clock is still tickin', guessin' that God is still with me. 'Cause I could have been gone so many times before, it feels like murda is chasin' me, escapin' with my instincts tellin' me that I might not live long in my life.

My life is a jungle, I really don't love it, and it's ready to crumble. I fight with these devils daily but still I try to stay humble. I try not to fall — what if I trip, or slip. Try to stay calm, what if I flip... last night I had a long talk with myself. Drama had a youngsta wonderin' how close am I to hell? But I have to break from it, can't let 'em break me, but everyday they try to break me off. I'm goin' thru it right now in my mind state, but don't worry when I'm in the clouds — 'cause that's how I step.

**-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Sometimes when we are "goin' thru it" — we all talk to ourselves. We're not going crazy or anything, we just need to find out what's going on or how to fix what's been broken. Tell yourself, "nothing is stronger than me" and "I am going to be okay." Oh, and keep your head up.*

## Lil' Ray's Page

### HELP ME OUT

I just wanna separate from the pressures daily, or maybe I was meant to live my life put up in this world with games. In God's name I pray, 'cause the devil just been bringin' me down. I can feel him 'cause he's pinning me now, but I been blessed with a wonderful girl in this mission. But hard times wanna break us on down, now ain't that foul?

So I ask the Lord to help me, Lord why does this life overwhelm me? We just livin' in hell, but we gotta cherish everyday like we in heaven. But only time'll tell so I listen for the ringin' of the bell, and it be hard to maintain and stay peaceful. That's a weakness, so the devil will see it and beat you, deceive you, evil, he will never leave you alone.

I been lookin' for a better day, but they don't ever seem to wanna come by way. I'm havin' a hell of a time stressin', 'cause my people steady stressin' my mind. But I get by 'cause God is wit' me, but wicked is deadlier than venom, if it get in you — it could really send you on a deadly mission. Just keep your distance from the flames and maybe you could survive another day.

**-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: What do you think is stronger — the power of God or the power of the devil? There is a saying that goes like this, "Dark cannot drive out dark — only light can do that." Do you see the light at the end of the tunnel you're going through? Keep your head up — you're a good writer!*

### What I'm Thinkin'

As I wake up in the morning I jump up outta my bed. Freedom is on my mind as I pace this 6 by 9 cell. It seems like I ain't seen daylight. They got me caged like I'm runnin' wild just for tryin' to be myself. Since they act like we ain't even here. But I say I done no wrong, I wanna go home now.

They ain't tryin' to listen to that. The homies I used to call — they ain't pickin' up the phone now, but I ain't even trippin' off that. I miss my mamma, brother, sister an' girl and I'm feelin' so alone now and I'm wishin' they could call back.

I guess I'm payin' the dues of a real true soljah.

**-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Now that things are clear as day to you, do you think it was worth it? What's more important than your freedom? You have a long life ahead of you so don't rush it. Slow down.*



### To Stephanie

I'm still a believer of us, so just listen and look into my eyes... I want you to visualize and realize, and see that it never been too easy bein' me so I try to push up outta the wind and persuasion rattlin' my brain.

I won't go insane but I think I'm goin' crazy and I still maintain. We gotta struggle thru all these hard times and I gotta tell you peace and happiness is hard to find... but we can get there.

I'm not tryin' to make excuses or reasons, but these demons got me seein' things that really been misleadin' me. But maybe that's just my life or maybe I'm just a thug... cold hearted but I can feel the love. Just keep the faith and don't break it, shake all them fakers an' haters and I'm tellin' you we'll make it...

Yeah that's real... but really Stephanie, we gone make it thru this no matter how long I get, me an' you both know that.

**-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Your girl must really love you to stick with you through all the drama. How can you make her feel special and loved? You wanna be there for her — be there. Remember, "Love makes time pass; time makes love pass."*

**They got me caged  
like I'm runnin'  
wild just for tryin'  
to be myself**



## "The Phone Call"

### Wifey

The first person I called when I got locked up was my wifey. The reason was because if I hadn't called her, I probably wouldn't have been able to call her after a couple of days of being locked up.

And 'cause I knew that I would get a book-in phone call, so I could call my dad when I got to the Hall. Another reason for calling her was 'cause as soon as I got those cuffs on my wrist, I missed her like hell. And I had to talk to her to tell her what my situation was. That's the reason's I called those people.

-Dante

**From The Beat: Did talking to your girl on the phone bring back memories? What is your most precious memory with your girl? What can you do to show your girl that she is more important to you than the things that bring you to Juvenile Hall?**

### Phoned Grandma

My first phone call was to my grandma, 'cause I needed some strength.

Just to hear her voice, made me kinda sad. I also wanted to call my lil' mama (girlfriend), but I couldn't.

I am very disappointed for what I did, but no matter what — I still have to suffer the consequences. [To be continued.]

-Vincent

**From The Beat: It may be hard to see, but that remorse you feel — is like a Valentine to your grandma and your girl. Don't beat yourself up with disappointment, but also don't forget it.**

her what my charges were. So then she started to cry, and I told her, "Don't trip. Everything will be fine. Just pray for me and hope everything will come around soon."

I been waiting to go to court, and so far I haven't went. But the day I go, that's judgment day! So when you get that phone call, make sure it's to the person you really love.

-Domo

**From The Beat: It's cool that you reassured your grandmother when she started to cry. But if you really want everything to come out okay, judgment day will extend way past your court date — it will be every single day you live your life in freedom. And every day will depend on your good judgment: Will you do the (next) right thing and make grandmother's heart will sing?**

### Phone Call

When I got booked I called this lil' female 'cause almost everybody seen me when I came in. The way they hit the spot so I didn't need to call nobody but my patnas and her. Just so I could let them know what happen and to three way my mom to tell her to get me a lawyer.

They gave me damn near three phone calls. When I get straight through phone calls, I call my lil' females or my patnas.

-Lil' Rocky

**From The Beat: What is the best part about talking to people on the outs? Do memories with people come floating in your mind? Do phone calls become a tease?**

### My Grandmother & My Girlfriend

When I got locked up, the first person I called was my mom, but she was not at home. So, I'm thinkin' to myself, should I call my girlfriend?

But I thought to myself, "I don't want to hear her mouth." Because the night before I went to jail, I was at her house; and after I left her house, she called me — and I told her I was going to school in the morning, for the first time in a long time; and I was tired.

So she told me to call her in the morning, which I did. I told her, "Before I go to school, I'm gonna go post." And she said to be safe, and to call her after school. So now that I'm in the Hall, I'm thinking that if I call her she is gonna get on me. So my mind was spinning.

So I thought to myself, "I could call my grandmother." And that is what I did. Did I lie to my grandmother? No. I did not have to lie to her. If it's one person I can talk it, it's my grandmother. And so I asked her to tell all my girls to write me, which they have — so that can keep a ninja going!

When I am incarcerated, I call my grandmother and my number-one boo. I call my grandmother because I love her more than anyone in this world! And I call my number-one boo, well, because she's my number-one girl! Plus I got to keep in touch with all that's going on out there, you feel me?

I'm gonna let this one slide on ice. Since I got this stuff off my chest, I'm gonna let The Beat do the rest.

-Corn-Freaky

**From The Beat: You know, so many folks say, just like your girl did, "Be safe!" We say it, too. But you were about to go to school for the first time in a while, and you should have told yourself, "Now's not the time to slip back and post, or I might never get to where I need to go." In fact, say it a lot — like every time you're about to hit the spot! Then you really will be safe. Okay?**

### Called My Girl

When I got locked up in Juvenile Hall the first phone call I made was to my girlfriend. I told her what happened and she was really mad at me.

I told her the truth about what happened and she was really mad at me, she was also crying because I got locked up and I was going to Camp. I told her I had to do 5-6 months at Camp and she was upset because she won't see me for a period of time. I was mad at myself because I didn't have to do what I did.

-Lil' Dee

**From The Beat: Was there a lesson learned from this experience? How can you make up for lost time with your girlfriend? What will you do the next time you are faced with a temptation?**

### I CALLED MY MOM

The first phone call I got when I got locked up — I called my mom and told her that I was locked up.

I know she felt bad, and I felt bad, too! She asked me what happened and I told her. She said, "I hope God be with you." Then a click.

I'm cool getting a phone call, but I'd rather kick it on the outs with my haina. Well, I'm out. What's up to all! Keep your head up.

-Giggles

**From The Beat: Everyone prays, "God be with me." But how many pray for the strength to go with God? If you want to be on the outs to stay, with your mom plus your haina — think about!**

### I Remember My First Call

I remember when I first came in and made my phone call. I called my grandmother and couldn't get through!

So I called my sister, and then called my grandmother again and got through and told her what I needed. I told her, "Don't trip. Everything will be fine. Just pray for me and hope everything will come around soon."

I been waiting to go to court, and so far I haven't went. But the day I go, that's judgment day! So when you get that phone call, make sure it's to the person you really love.

-Domo

**From The Beat: It's cool that you reassured your grandmother when she started to cry. But if you really want everything to come out okay, judgment day will extend way past your court date — it will be every single day you live your life in freedom. And every day will depend on your good judgment: Will you do the (next) right thing and make grandmother's heart will sing?**

### WHO WOULD I CALL?

I would call my stepmother to get me out or probably my girlfriend that's what I think

-Nathan

**From The Beat: Are these the ones you'd call to talk with, too?**

### One Call Away

The first time I got locked up, was about two years ago. I got detained from court, so my grandma already knew where I was.

But when I got booked in, I called her anyway. And I asked her to come visit me. So she did. But I got out in a month.

-Payaso

**From The Beat: We can feel the bond between you and your grandmother. We know it hurts her to have you here. What could you do to stay out when you get out again?**

### FIRST PHONE CALL

When I first got locked up, I didn't get a phone call until two days later. When I finally had the phone call, I called my parents, so I could tell them to visit me.

I was in Intake, and my mom was asking me how I was doing in there. I was like, "Yeah, it's all right." But I didn't like it, 'cause they make you seem like dogs. Every time they want us out, they let us out. Every time they want us in, they make us stay in our cell, with those same four white walls.

After three weeks passed, I was released to go to Camp. And it's better over here than in Juvenile Hall. Now I get to go home every weekend.

-Td

**From The Beat: You didn't tell your mom all your complaints because you didn't want her to feel too bad. But now you can tell the truth about how you felt and how you were treated. We're glad you made it to Camp — and home weekends! We do hope you take the time to visit your mom, the way she visited you when your locked up, when you are home on weekends.**

### I WANT MY MOM TO KNOW

My first time coming to the Hall, the first person I called was my mom.

I wanted my mom to know where I was at, so my mother wouldn't think I had got killed! I didn't call my father, because he is dead. I told my mother what I had done, and she was mad! But she got over it.

Then I talked to my little brothers and got the phone numbers of some of my friends. And the next time I got a call, I called my friend. Some of my friends take the call and some of them don't. That's when I find out who my real friends are.

-Not Dead Yet

**From The Beat: Your real friends are the ones who will help you do the things you need to do and not do the things you need not to do — in order to stay safe and free. Maybe your mom's love for you also made her forget her anger, but you need to remember what made her mad and why.**

### PHONE HOME TO GRANDMA

When I first got to the Hall, I called my grandma — because it was too late to call other people.

Then I called my mom and asked her what she was doing. Then I told her I was going to court the next day. And then I asked her, would she be there? And she was!

-Lil' Dee

**From The Beat: You've got some love and support out there! Maybe that's why they gave you Camp, so you can get home weekends. With all you've got at home — leave the spot alone!**

**When I am incarcerated, I call my grandmother**



## I Called My Cousin

When I made my first phone call from lockdown, I called my cousin.

I did not even bother to call home, 'cause they did not want to hear from me anyways. At home, they already knew I was locked up, 'cause I had to call them on my intake phone call.

I told my cousin what was up, who had snitched, when I was going to court, and what it was like in the Hall. And I was scared at first, but then I began to get used to it. From there on out, I just dealt with it.

Well, I got to go. Stay up!

-Crazy

**From The Beat:** Sometimes we're so stressed, we just need to express it. We tell our story to someone we're sure will listen and be sympathetic. But if your cousin only tells you what you want to hear, also seek advice from those who speak straight, loud and clear; even if they tell you exactly what you feared. Without facing the truth — you'll never stay out of here!

## That Book-In Phone Call

[M = Me; G = My Girl; S = Staff]

... ring ... ring ... ring ...

G — Hello?

M — What's up, baby?

G — Baby, where you at? I haven't seen you since this morning!

M — Maaannnn! They got me!

G — Hold on, baby. Who got'chu?

M — The boys! They did a sweep earlier on, and I broke through. Then they got me down the street.

G — Well, baby, did they find any 'D' on you?

M — Hell naw! I threw that stuff when I ran. I just had that warrant. So I'm Charlie!

G — So what you want me to do now? Hold it down or what?

M — Naw, naw. Just be cool. But look, you got your ID, right? So come up here and see me on Saturday between 1:30 and 4:30, 'cause I got to tell you some stuff. They'll let you in if you just say you're my aunt!

G — All right, daddy. I got it.

S — Hang up! Now!

M — Hold the hell on! (Then back into the phone:) Baby, just come. I'm out. Love you!

G — I love you, too, baby. See ya soon.

... click! ...

-Lacey

**From The Beat:** Even all that scandalous writing you gave us last week, which we chose not to print, had that "just telling the real" feel. This week you came back with the same authentic sound. You can write! But remember, The Beat is about teaching how to live clear and free of the system, not just how to get over on it.

## I CALLED LOVED ONES

The first call I made was to my family. And then I called my girl, Gen, because I was supposed to talk to her that day and go kick it with her.

And she looked good that day, just waiting for me to go kick it with her! I called her. And I called my family because I love them a lot, more than anything — it's my family!

-Lil' Thai

**From The Beat:** You've got a lot of love in your heart. Keep feeding that love till it starts to show in all parts of your life — 'cause you and your loved ones deserve so much more than steady gangster strife!

## The Family Phone call

The first person I called was my family to see what was up with the situation. I didn't lie but I was careful what I said on the phone.

On my recreational time I call my friends and see what is going on in my town. Mostly I call females make sure they know when I'm getting out.

-James

**From The Beat:** You're smart. It's good to keep the ties with friends but remember that you got to pick them right. Kick it with those that encourage you to do the right thing.

## The Phone Call To Mom

The first person I called was my mother, she was 'sleep. It was about three o' clock in the morning. I had told her the true story. I said I shot somebody. She froze, then start' askin' me what happened and where I was.

I wouldn't lie about my situation because she would just have to call downtown and ask what I was there for, so I rattled my own self out. I felt that it was better for me to tell her then those police officers.

-B'Z Bo

**From The Beat:** You are honest. How's your mother taking it all? It's a sad thing all the guns and violence. How come people seem to have little value for their lives and others and little thought for the consequences of their actions? Let us know what you think.

## The Phone Call

When I got lock up this time, I called my mommy. She said to just be hard and do your time. "I'll be there for you, okay?". And I was just talking to her and ever since then she been trying to help me to get me out of here.

So I went to the Hall and I called my mom. She said to just be hard and do your time. "I'll be there for you, okay?". And I was just talking to her and ever since then she been trying to help me to get me out of here.

But my PO keeps hating, saying that I'm out of control. But I'm not out of control. I just want to get out of this place because I can't stand being here in this busy place. Especially seeing my momma coming to this place and visiting me and when she leave she be depressed.

I hope I'll change when I get out and turn my life back around.

-Young T

**From The Beat:** Young T, we hope that you'll change to. Why do you hope to change? For your mom? For your freedom? Well, those are both good reasons. How are you going to change? What is it specifically that needs to be changed? You can do it, you just need help. Don't be afraid to ask for it.

**my PO keeps hating, saying that I'm out of control.**

## "The Phone Call"

### CALLED MY MOTHER

The first person I phoned was my mother. I called my mom first, because she is the most important person in my life.

I told her I was in here for nothing. I told my mother the truth, and it was very easy to tell her the truth. And I called my mother every time I used the phone since I've been locked up (except one time).

I call my mother because I feel that my mother is the most important person in my life. [RIP Ronezz & Kenny Mac]

-Greg

**From The Beat:** Calling your mom is one way to show your love. Getting off the street and out the life that keeps putting you here (whether you're guilty of the charge or not), is a better plan. We're not saying it's easy, but if you really want to — you can!

### Phone Call

The first person that I called was my baby mama, because I feel that she should be the first one that should be told. And when I called her, I told her the truth. And I told her to tell my mom and for her to come to court.

-Malo

**From The Beat:** It's nice that you have his kind of relationship with your baby-mama. How did she react when you told her the truth? How would you react if the tables were turned? Do you think honesty is always the best policy?

### Baby Moma Phone Call

The phone call when I got locked up. I called my boyfriend I told him that I was in a jail and told him I had weed on me.

-Anonymous

**From The Beat:** Was your boyfriend mad? Was he worried about you? What were his feelings? What did he say to you? Were you scared to call him? How did you feel about getting caught? And the weed?

### My First Phone Call

When I got locked up the first person I called was my momma. When I called her I told her the truth, what I did and why!

The reason I'm here is because I was out at 4:30 in the morning driving a car without permission. The cops pulled me over and took me in.

-Erika

**From The Beat:** Erika, we really admire you for telling the truth. Did you consider calling someone else, other than your mom? What was going through your mind? Was there any struggle about what to do? Or did you know right away, the right thing to do?

### PHONE CALL TO MOM AND TWO BMS

When I got in the back of the police car I knew that I was gone because the police looked like they ain't got nothing to do but pull me over. I was like I don't have no ID and it's about two in the morning.

Man, it's over then I called my B-M, then mom and then my other B-M. Then from there, if somebody was looking for me, they would tell them the deal. But I know one thing, they can't hold me down forever.

-Lil' Lee

**From The Beat:** On the real Lil' Lee, it seems like you are the one holding yourself down. No more excuses. This is it. Two baby mommas huh? Wow you got major responsibilities to take care of out there. Stay legit or you will be unemployed and an absent dad while you are incarcerated just for that fast temporary money. We wish you the best.





## "The Phone Call"

### *The First Call*

When I first came to this place, the first person I called was my girl. I know some people don't believe in calling their girl, but my case is different.

I live with my girl and my daughter, and since I got caught around 7:00 a.m., she might have thought I had got caught up by my rivals, or maybe that I was with another girl, so I couldn't let her think that. That's why she is the first person I called when I came here. (And because she is my queen and I love her with all my heart and I didn't want her to worry.)

-Diablyto B4

**From The Beat:** We would like to honor you for treating your family with the respect and love they deserve. It sounds to us, as we have said before, that you are on a new roll, dedicating yourself to a new lifestyle out of love for your daughter and your girl. We believe you have the power to break the cycle of violence and revenge that describes the lives of far too many young people we know, always with terrible consequences. We also think your girl and daughter are lucky to have you.

### **My First Phone Call**

When I got locked up, who was the first person I called? The first person I call is my mother, because my mother was there every time when I did bad things and got arrested and got locked up. My mother will always be there for me.

As I call my mother, I will tell her I got locked up and don't worry about me.

-Mei B2

**From The Beat:** Do you think your mom is more worried when you are locked up or when you are out? Do you think there will be a day when your moms won't have to worry about you?

### **STOP PLAYING**

The phone call I made when I got locked up was to my uncle and auntie. Then I told my sister to three-way my girl, and I told her that I'm locked. She said, "What? Stop playing!"

I said, "Look at the caller ID and tell me if you see my cell number." Then I told my sister to call my big bro Byron. Then she said a'ight, so I went back to the room and started thinking about everything, ya know.

-Zoomungus B5

**From The Beat:** What did your uncle and auntie say when you called? What did your girl say when she realized you weren't playing? When you went back to think about things, did you think about how you could avoid coming here in the first place so you wouldn't have to be phoning anyone from the Hall?

### *Telling Mom*

My first phone call was to my mom. I called my mom because I thought that I was going home. I thought that because it was my first time going down.

I thought if the police did not have nothing, and you did not do what they was hollerin', you go home. But that wasn't the case, so I had to tell moms that her baby was going on lock down. I called my mom because I did not want her to think something different happened to me.

-Leek B5

**From The Beat:** Was it scary that first time when you didn't know what to expect? It was thoughtful of you to let your mom know what had happened. Was she mad? Sad? What did she say?

### *Big Phone Call*

I call my mom.  
I tell her where I'm at.  
And I tell why.

T-Dub

**From The Beat:** What does your mom say when you tell her where you are?

### **MOM**

When I first got in here, I called my mom because she didn't know I was in here. So I told her why I was in here because I was on the run!

I talked to my little sister for a few, and told her to call my baby's momma so I could tell her that I was locked up, so she wouldn't be worried about me.

RIP Reem, Lee, Cheez, Fred.

-Young Duke B1

**From The Beat:** What did you mother say when you told her? What about your baby's momma? What are you going to do to make sure that you can be with your baby (who needs you), your girl and your momma, and not be forced to write about them from the inside of four walls?

### *Calling Moms*

When I first got locked up, I called my moms. I told her the truth, because I don't got nothing to hide from my mom, because she know what type of son she raised, a hustler.

When I get my rec phone call I call my mom and my mom bust the three-way to call my female.

-Bear- Weezy

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you are putting it on your moms that you are a hustler, is it really on her?

### **MOM CARES**

When I got locked up, I called my mom 'cause she's the most important person in my life, and I had to let her know I was here. She knew what I did, but she didn't know I was here.

While I'm incarcerated, I call my mom on the recreational time, 'cause she the only person I can call, and she cares a lot 'bout me. I have to let her know what's going on, feel me.

-Lil' Cat B1

**From The Beat:** What do you think your mom wants most for you? That's right, she wants you with her, free to live your life. Are you going to give her that gift of yourself?

### **No Title**

When I first came in, I wanted to call my mom to let her know where I was just so she won't think I'm dead or somethin'. Then I will call the homies to let them know dat a "suckel" turned state evidence after claimin' he was gangsta.

That's the part of the game I don't get. Why is it good to do dirt, but when someone do somethin' to them, then they get scared and snitch, not knowin' that someone just might know where they live.

I feel if you snitch, it's gon' be quick to catch you in a minute. Just give it some time and you'll see what'll happen. So if you readin' this, don't do nothin' you won't regret, because you will regret it if you snitch.

-Young Fatz B5

**From The Beat:** In every Beat, we read the veiled threats to snitches. "I know where you live." "Snitches end in ditches." "Don't do nothin' you're gonna regret," etc. But snitching still goes on, otherwise we wouldn't be reading about it. So it seems to us that a much more effective strategy to avoid the consequences you're now living would be to stop doing whatever it is they snitched on you about. Feel us?

### **No Call**

What it is Beat? When I got locked up, the first person I called was nobody 'cause nobody got me locked up but myself. I don't need to call no one 'cause I put myself in here and I'ma get myself out.

I ain't no lil' boy.. I'ma grown man. The only person I would call to chop it up with, is my Lil' Momma, Jazzy. That's the only person I would call. I don't call my folks to hold me down. My wife Jazzy holds me down.

-Jay-Baby B4

**From The Beat:** Maybe you should call yourself and call it a wake-up call?

### **Don't Worry**

When I got locked up, the first person I called was my mom because I knew that she was the only person that will support me to the fullest. I tried to reassure her, like I would say I'm not going to be here for long, so that she wouldn't worry about me.

-Young Skits YTEC

**From The Beat:** It's good that you have the full support of your moms even though you got locked up. What are you going to do to be there for her once you are out? Do you think she worries about you more when you are locked up or on the outs?

### **Callin' Mama**

Well, the first time I got locked up I was really trippin'. It was nothing 'cause I knew I was going to get locked up. I mean, you're going to get out one day.

The first time I got wrapped up, I called my momma. She was the first person I called. She was not trippin' 'cause I wasn't living at the house, so I guess it wasn't nothing.

But the third time I got wrapped up, I called my mom again. But at rec time I was calling the homies 'cause I didn't want to call my mom during rec, but the homies were, "Yeah," and that's my story who I called.

- Anonymous YTEC

**From The Beat:** What's the point of calling the homies? What did they tell you when you called them?

### *The Phone Call*

I called my mom and dad and they came up to YGC immediately to see me. And my brother and sister was asking about me. My parents told them I was at my cousin's house, but my brothers and sisters didn't believe my parents. My little sister goes, "You in jail with no bail."

-Ken B4

**From The Beat:** It sounds like your little sister knows more about you than you'd like her to. Now, when are you going to give her the chance to say, "That's my big brother. He in college."

### **PHONE HOME**

My first call I called my house to see who was there. I talked to my grandma for a minute. Then my sister hopped on the phone, an' she said that she heard what happened and she was mad that they arrested me instead of going after the true criminals.

A little insight on my case. I'm not guilty. He had to feel me.

-Peter B5

**From The Beat:** What does your last sentence mean? Who has to feel you? Actually, we feel you. What happened to "the true criminals?" Why are you in their place?

### **Big Phone Call**

The person I called first...

My baby momma because she quench my thirst...

I love her, but I ain't nothing but a flirt...

She's the one for me and I don't want her to get hurt...

I told my girl do what you do...

As soon as I get out I'm going to come through...

You already know I still put it down for you...

Baby, forget my ninjas and my crew...

When I get out it's going to be me and you...

-Young G B4

**From The Beat:** We can't have you holding your colors up in The Beat, so we took that out. We also worry about you holding your colors up when you're on the outs again, because we know that is the one thing likely to stand between you and your baby's momma. You can't choose both. To choose your color is to abandon your baby and her momma. To choose them is to abandon the streets. Which is it going to be?



## Callin' Moms

When I was a young buck, my moms took care of me more than pops. So when I got locked up back in Feb., the first person I called was my moms 'cause she cares more about me than my pops.

All I would hear from him is yelling, so I didn't bother dialing his number. So when I got booked in, I called my moms and let her know what the scoop on what happened and how long I was going to be locked up.

First, it was hard to tell the truth to moms, but I had to, and I did. She understood, and just told me she loves me no matter what, and she will always be there for me when I need her. The thing that makes me call my moms is that I would always call her when I would have the chance.

-Six

**From The Beat:** We really appreciate the fact that telling your mom what happened was not easy, but you did it. Now, can you also do the hard things necessary to stay out of places like this? Like what?

## I Called My Mom

The first person I called when I got locked up was my mom. The reason I called my mom was so she could know where I am, 'cause sometimes I don't be coming home for days to a week, sometimes even longer.

I told my mom don't even stress about anything I already got homeboys in here. I also said I'ma do my little time and get out then be home and do good, or at least try to. When she asked me what I did I told her I don't know 'cause I didn't want to tell her the truth, 'cause eventually she'll find out anyways.

-Funk-E

**From The Beat:** If she's going to find out the truth anyway, wouldn't you want to be the one telling her? In that way, she doesn't have to have a stranger tell her about your actions. Plus, you'll have a chance to answer any questions she may have and clarify the situation before others cloud it for her. Are your homeboys in there going to help you do your time, or are they going to drag you down? What's it going to take to do good when you get back out? What does doing good mean to you?

## GOTS TO SHINE

My first phone call would be to my mother — that's fo' sho'. One reason is because she's the only one I'm allowed to call. The other reason would be because she's not only a mother to me but my best friend, and she gots to know what's going on with me.

On my recreational time the first person I call is my mother and if I can't get a hold of her than I call my "boy." What makes me want to call them is that I have to catch up on what's going on in the house, and "my boy" to see what's he up to and to see if he still holding it down for his lady.

I feel irritated being around all these females all day I can't stand half of them 'cause they either try to hate or compete, knowing they ain't got nothing on me, but I just got to keep my side of the streets clean and keep myself together 'cause I got twenty-four good behavior days that they ain't worth. So I gots to shine one time — oh boy, please believe it! I'm out.

-Blanca

**From The Beat:** It's coo' that you've managed to keep your cool, looking at the bigger picture instead of sweating the small stuff. How do you plan to shine on the outs? What are you going to do to make sure your shine steady keeps you on the outs?

## The First Phone Call

When I first got locked up, the first person I called was my mom because I wanted her to know that I was ok. I told her everything that happened.

She was mad at me, but at the same time, she was sad I was in here. But no matter what I did, she was always there for me telling me to keep my head up, not to worry, that everything was gonna be ok.

That's the reason why I called my mom, because I knew she was gonna be there for me and she wasn't gonna let me down. That's why I love her with all my heart.

-Smokey

**From The Beat:** Being a parent can be the hardest, most heart-breaking job in the world. When you think about the pain your mother had to hide from you when she got that call, does it make you want to do anything differently when you get back home? If your mom is there for you, how are you going to change in order to be there for her?

## "The Phone Call"

### THE FIRST PERSON

The first person I called was my mom because she's the only one who's there for me all the time. I told her that I was sorry and that I messed up because I was out for two weeks and got wrapped up. I told her to not trip, I will be out soon.

But it came out to me bein' in here for a long time. I been down since August 2003; hopefully I will get out in August 2004. I told my mom that I did it because I'm always straight up with my mom. I told her that I loved her and hanged up. That's it though, I'm out.

-Nicoya

**From The Beat:** It's cool that you have a relationship with your mom whereby you're always straight with her. Why have you been down so long? Did you face more serious charges than you expected to? How have you maintained your relationship with your mom throughout the past year? Can the strength of your relationship with your mother help you stay on the outs once you're released?

### THE THREE-WAY PHONE CALL

What's up Beat? I'm back one more time with all y'all. I'm going to be writing about topic number two: The phone call.

When I got locked up, the first person I called was my mom. I called her 'cause I wanted to tell her that everything was coo' with me, and to don't trip about nothing. I also called my mom to tell her to three-way my girlfriend, 'cause I wanted to talk to her.

When she three-wayed my girl, my heart was pumping hell fast. All of a sudden, my girl answered her phone and I told her that I got arrested for probation violation. She started to cry because she wasn't able to see me. So then I just told her to stop crying, because everything was going to be ok, and that I love her with all my heart.

When I'm incarcerated and I'm on recreational time, I call my mom to see if she's doing fine. Then I tell her to three-way my girl so that I can talk to her. What makes me want to call her is all the loneliness that I have inside of me, and because I just want to tell her how much I love her and miss her.

-Giggles

**From The Beat:** How will you be able to call on this memory of loneliness when you are back together with your family and your girl? In other words, what changes do you plan to make so that you won't have to miss you family because you'll be able to stay with them? If you don't change anything, you can expect that the consequences will also not change, and we'll be seeing you here again. If you do change something, we'd like you to write us and tell us how you made that change and what it's meant in your life.

## I FEEL MISTREATED

I feel like I'm being mistreated. These are some low-down staff. I've been here ever since March 10th, and I have not called my mother, not one damn time.

I have not seen my probation officer once. I don't even know what the hell he look like. Every time I write a probation officer request form, he seem not to be around any damn where. But it's a'ight, though.

My mom is in Alabama so that means I don't get a visit, but these are some low down staff. They have their picks and chooses and stuff like that. So whoever reads this and don't like, forget you.

-Roderick

**From The Beat:** You need to spend a little more time explaining the details of your argument. You say the staff is low-down, but except for explaining "they have their picks and chooses," you don't give any more information. Are there staff that you like, that help you when you need it? What makes a good staff person? As for not seeing your PO, has anyone given you a reason for that? Do you have anyone outside the Hall you can talk to?

## I Feel Like An Animal

I feel...

I feel like a beast locked in a cage  
Trapped in rage

I feel...

I feel anger pain, rage  
I hate my damn cage  
Trapped in rage

I feel...

I feel like a crazy  
Psychopath trapped  
If they let me out  
I'm ready to dash  
Telling them to kiss my ash

I feel...

I feel like a misfit  
Like a lone wolf  
Left out by the pack

I feel...

-Young Bug

**From The Beat:** Do you feel you'll ever change the way you feel? How can you use your anger and pain to guide you to a better future? How will you guard your freedom — once you get it back — to avoid ever having to feel like this again?

## "I Feel..."

### Emotions

I feel excited.

I feel like time is now going to slow  
I feel pissed off 'cause cats in here think they hard  
I feel nervous 'cause I don't know what people will say when I get out.

-Six

**From The Beat:** Feeling nervous about getting out of here is a mark of maturity. You will be faced with the same people, the same temptations that led you here to begin with. Will you go back to doing whatever that was, or will you make a break with the past so that your future does not include more captivity?

### I Feel These Haters

I feel these haters breathin' down my neck  
I feel 'em starin' me down at rec  
I see 'em tryin' to outshine me  
but that'll never be  
Stop hatin' on me  
when I'm trying to succeed.

-Ashley

**From The Beat:** Why do you think people hate on those who are succeeding? How can you learn to let the hate slide so that you're not tripping off of it?

**I have not seen my probation officer once. I don't even know what the hell he look like.**



## "I Feel..."

### I FEEL...

I feel violated in this place.  
I feel sad  
I feel like I'm nothing,  
I feel angry  
I feel hopeless,  
I feel...

-Dante

**From The Beat: You have a lot of mixed emotions running through you. Keep your head up and get yourself a one-way ticket out that place.**

### I Feel ...!

i feel like  
screaming  
for what (you ask)  
sentimental meaning  
i feel like going to sleep  
and dreaming  
to escape these  
aggravated feelings  
'cause in my dreams  
i am free  
to do whatever it is  
i please  
i feel like the time has come  
to grow up  
and be strong  
i feel that no matter  
who steps on  
your fingers — hold on  
no matter who  
brings you to the point of rage  
remember it's just another story  
on another page  
i'm feeling as if i were on a stage  
in a drama  
'cause of all the trauma  
but i feel whatever  
the world throws my way  
i can take  
as i journey  
down the crookedest roads  
violent delights  
have violent ends  
tempt not a desperate man  
till next time  
i'll see you at the crossroads  
maybe you'll be holding my hand

-Ben

**From The Beat: On the crooked road, every twist and turn provides a chance to learn a lesson. And if you do, then the pain endured, becomes a blessing. Don't want to meet a violent end? Leave violence behind at the next bend. And do whatever you please, but only after your heart learns to see: outside of sleepers' dreams, in reality freedom also means responsibility. That's your sentimental meaning, the heart's wisdom given to those with educated feelings.**

## I ain't really feelin' this court system.

### I FEEL

I feel like an animal locked away in a cage, isolated from my family.  
I feel like I deserve a second chance to get my life on the right path.  
Sometimes I feel like laying down and not waking up.  
I feel like getting out of this messed up environment.  
I feel like I consciously add more stress to my mother's life  
I feel like doing it, moving.  
And that's exactly how I feel.

-Bt

**From The Beat: Moving is a good thing. What kind of move are you thinking? You can start moving mentally. Move away from the kind of decisions you were making, then go from there. You're a smart girl, start making smart decisions.**

### I Feel...

I feel when I read The Beat about homies tryin' to change and do right — it sounds like you guys are going out. I feel you on doing right like not come to jail, but when it comes to standing up for what we represent — we got to do it to the fullest even if it means coming to jail.

But to the homies get your head straight and don't let this jail time get you to start thinking different. Stay up, be coo' but represent to the fullest homeboy 'cause it can't stop till my casket drops.

I am out!

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: Sounds like you're the one who needs to get your head right! Either that or you must really like jail! Wake up! The only person who'll be there at the end is your real family — Aunt Jami! And she may throw in the towel after awhile.**

### I Feel...

I feel it was hella ancient how this whole lil' stuff went down wit' my case. I ain't really feelin' this court system. They don't know how it feel to be in this situation.

-Lil' Rocky

**From The Beat: If you don't like the system, then can you find a way out of it?**

### I Feel

I feel that I should be at home  
I feel that I made a mistake  
I feel that the DA does us wrong  
I feel that every one deserves more than one chance.  
I feel that what I feel doesn't mean a damn thang.  
That's how I feel.

-Lil' 9b

**From The Beat: Lil' 9b, what you're feeling means a lot. Your words have the potential to be extremely powerful. We here at The Beat are always asking, "How do you feel?" It means a lot to our readers and us. We want to know how you feel about everything. You are part of a population that needs to be heard. You feel that you should be at home, that you made a mistake, that the DA does you wrong, well, use The Beat as your outlet. Holla! Yell it! Write it! How do you feel?**

### I FEEL

I feel like hurting myself.  
I feel like crying but I can't.  
I feel so sad.

-Cindy

**From The Beat: We all go through times when we feel bad. Can you remember a time that you felt happy? Have you ever had one of those times where you start laughing and can't stop? Have you ever loved someone? Those are the great things about life. So even when you're feeling down, take comfort in knowing that it is not forever. It may feel like it, but there is always lightness after darkness, always.**

### I FEEL LIKE A SUPERSTAR

i feel like a superstar  
'cause everywhere i go  
everybody wants my attention  
man tell me why  
these broads stay  
havin' my name  
in thei' mouth like it's platinum  
why is it that people stay watchin'  
i ain't no t v i'm just me  
broads stay hatin'  
'cause thei' dude want me  
it ain't my fault i look good  
you can't hate me 'cause i'm a stunna  
like for instance the only reason  
people stay respectin' me  
is because i respect myself  
and without respectin' yourself  
ain't no one else  
gon' respect  
it's just that simple  
nowadays it's funny  
when the next female wanna be like me  
every move i make she right behind  
it's like she must be  
my shadow  
hey is it that necessary  
to stay followin' tryena  
be like a gee  
but it ain't never gonna happen  
'cause she  
stay keepin' it lit  
and never been fake  
or no follower  
stay bein' a leader

-Lil' Mama Hanna

**From The Beat: We see that you've expanded your earlier poem on haters. And some of these twists, have wit. But time to move on to the next stage. Don't give haters more space on your page.**

### HOW I FEEL

I feel like,  
Why is there a need to try?  
When all you do is lie.  
So why try?  
But why can't you just try for once in your life?  
Oh wait, I forgot all you do is lie.  
So don't tell me you will try.

-Lil'

**From The Beat: Unfortunately, we all know people like this. A lot of us have this struggle within ourselves. The question is, how do we deal with this kind of person? What do you think? Liars suck. That's what we think.**

## I feel like I consciously add more stress to my mother's life

### I Feel...

I feel so many things being in the Hall. I feel mad depressed, hopeless, jealous. So many feelings I can't explain. I feel like I'm being kept in a box too small for my potential.

Being stuck behind the locked doors takes a toll on my emotions. At times I feel dead inside, wanting to turn back to addictions I had. But then, I think about the few people in here that care, the staff and two detainees. They care, and suddenly I have a new found hope. I know that when I get on the outs things will be different, people will be different. But the new found friends I have made, who want to better themselves, won't be. I got my release today and I am happy. But at the same time, I feel lonely.

I don't want to be alone on the outs, but I know it will only be for a short time. And now I feel a single tear wanting to fall out of the eyes that were once dead, but are now filled with new life.

Special Thanks to Mrs. Wadud, Ms. Westbrook, and Ms. Alverado.

Much love and thanks. Keep ya heads up, I'll be waiting for ya'll on the outs!

-Dri-Dri

**From The Beat: Dri-Dri, your time in the Hall was a beneficial experience. These opportunities in the Hall exist, thanks to the wonderful staff at Alameda County Juvenile Hall. It is going to be different on the outs, but you got a team now. You have got people that care about you, people that want to help you. We only hope that you take advantage of this when you find yourself in a situation that requires help. We wish you the best, and we are always here for you as well. Keep in touch.**





## I Feel Sad

I feel sad right now because I haven't talked to my girlfriend or mom. I feel sad because I want to hug my girl and tell her that I miss her a lot. I feel mad because time is going by hella slow, and I don't know what's going to happen with me on my court date on the 17th of May.

I feel lonely because my homeboy Chente (RIP) is no longer by my side. I feel like a volcano ready to erupt on one of my enemies that took my homeboy's life away.

I feel sad, because I'm not going to be with my mom for Mother's Day. I just feel like falling to the ground and collapsing 'cause of all the pain that I have inside of me. I can't take this shhh anymore.

-Giggles

**From The Beat: We feel the sadness and loneliness in this piece, and yet, we also feel the danger in your self-description as a volcano ready to erupt. The problem, Giggles, is that you can't have it both ways. You can't get out, go off on your "enemies," and expect to stay with your mom or your girl, because you already know the consequences to the cycle of violence and return violence. Can you focus on a reading or writing project that will help you get through this dark period of sadness you're feeling? Since you have to be here, how can you maximize the benefits to you and minimize the despair?**

## I Feel Fine

I feel great, awesome, hella great. I'm gone out of this place. Back on the outs listening to rancid, misfits, going to concerts at the pound. Just living my life normal.

Today I'm kinda sluggish, because I didn't get much sleep, because of a loud TV.

-Frost

**From The Beat: We're not sure why you should be feeling so good, so awesome, except that maybe you're a little sleep-deprived due to that loud TV at night. When that happens, is there anything you can do effectively to get the staff to turn the TV down at night?**

## The Way Of The Streets

I feel like going crazy. I feel like knocking out fools left and right 'cause they took my carnal. But sometimes I don't believe it, but I have to deal with the fact — that's the way of the streets.

The only way my pain will go away is the big payback that's the only way all this anger will leave and my stress. But I know that's not the way 'cause it's not going to bring back my homie. That's just how I feel.

-Goofy

**From The Beat: Man, we can't imagine how painful it is to lose your homie, but we don't think that payback will make any of the pain go away. To the contrary, it'll only cause more pain, not only to your rivals, but to your family and even yourself as the cycle of killing continues. Your homie is gone, and it is a tragedy that he was killed, let alone at such a young age. Giving up your life to the bullet or to the penitentiary will only compound the tragedy.**

## Freedom Calling Me Out Loud

Right now I feel happy because I have 85 days left. To some that might seem like a long time; for me that's freedom calling my name out loud, considering I've already been here 11 months.

Then again I feel a little worried because in here I've already got my mind made up on what I want to do, but once I get out it might be a different song. But I know that if I want to go down a different road, then I'll have to keep my mind made up.

-Youn1

**From The Beat: It's tough when the plan you've decided on doesn't quite match the circumstances you face when you finally touch down. The key is to have a couple underlying principles — a few things that can be applied to whatever circumstances you face. What are your goals when you get released?**

## My UNEXPRESSIBLE LOVE

My love towards you feels like a pen wit no ink  
a book wit' no words  
a body wit' no soul  
a soul wit' no body  
an ink wit' no pen

I don't know if this list is gonna end.

Can you tell me when?

I need a mouth wit' words

not a mouth wit' no words

I need to know how you feel

but please keep it real.

I don't want any lies

'cause I don't wanna cry

and get high to the sky.

My heart keeps ticking

no time for ticking

you know who I'm picking.

I wanna be with you now —

what you wanna do?

If you wanna be with me

I could set you free

from all this misery.

So tell me are you gonna be down for me?

Now you got me on my knees

saying God please take this away from my heart

'cause it's tearing me apart.

I don't know what to do

I feel like a fool.

It's ashamed the way you playin' this game

'cause you're not playing it right

you know I keep my love tight.

Once again I feel like going insane

because of all this pain

it's like a rain wit' no clouds

but nothing is gonna bring me down

but I must say it loud and proud

I love you and I want you.

-Mona

**From The Beat: You manage to capture much of the ambiguity of love in some of your lines. It's not all bliss if it's got you feeling like a body wit' no soul or a soul wit' no body. If this love isn't returned, how will you become whole again? Even if it does develop, are you suggesting that you're only whole when you're with someone else? Can you, in yourself, become whole, so that — among other things — when you do find love you're able to give all of yourself to it?**

## Can't Be Touched

I feel the devil got me held down  
I walk through the town wit' a frown  
Lookin' for somebody to lay down  
When I'm hungry, somebody gon cash out  
This street life got me makin' money the fast route  
Blowin' hash clouds

I can't shake these crazy thoughts

That's going through my mental

The streets named me a lunatic

And the judge named me a criminal

Constantly in thug mode

Tryin' to keep a threshold on my pesos

Grindin' wit' a mountain full of gold

Thizzen wit' my real rogues

I feel I can't be touched

Like Osama wit' a kata clutched

I feel I'm the realist.

-Thinzel Washington

**From The Beat: So, you're "makin' money the fast route," and you're stackin' your pesos. Does your "fast route" calculate the time you've spent here? Are you managing your pesos while you're sitting on your hands in here? You feel like you can't be touched, but here you are, being touched from morning 'til night. How does this little "time out" you're experiencing affect your evaluation of your life?**

## "I Feel. . ."

### I Feel Tired

I feel hella tired right now. I'm a light sleeper, meaning I get woken up easily by footsteps, talking, TV, or any other things that can make even the slightest bit of noise.

I usually fall asleep late and wake up early, which gives me about 5 to 7 hours of sleep. Almost every other night, the same staff that works grave yard be having the TV blasting. It be like three in the morning, and this jerk be slippin' some music videos. Then, when we ask him to turn it down, he tells us to "Shut the #!! up," or "Go #!! yourselves."

It's funny, but at the same time that's hella shady.

-Oso

**From The Beat: We really don't think this is such a funny thing, Oso. You need a full night's sleep for you physical and mental health. If the graveyard shift is keeping you awake and telling you to shut up when you complain about it, we suggest you file a grievance. The more of you who have experienced this abuse and who report it, the more likely it is to be changed.**

### I Feel Bad

I feel bad in this place. These four walls got me going insane. Sitting in my cell got me thinking about my family and friends, regretting everything that I did. Wishing I could be back to the town so I could start a new life with no drama.

My PO wants to send me to camp for something that I didn't even do, but in this world you have to learn how to deal with the drama. My girl is out there missing me, because I can't even talk to her on the phone.

But it's all good because I'll get out of this place soon, and I'll be taking care of her and all the people I love.

-Smokey

**From The Beat: We can feel the excitement and hope as you approach your release date. We hope you remember the pain and loneliness you felt in here so that you won't be tempted to come back. If you know what brought you here, then you also know what will keep you away from here. Do the right thing!**

## THE KEY

Screaming for freedom, but no words come out  
Do my words mean nothing, what's this all about?  
Desperate measures searching for the answer of all this

In the belly of the beast, but for what I insist?

Rehabilitation is the opposite of all this incarceration

Self-determination to finish this duration

Question myself and questioning the system

Freedom is the key, freedom is my mission

Freedom is in the hand of who are higher than I am

But freedom has to come one day

'Cause I have to find freedom in myself first, anyway.

-Peanut Head

**From The Beat: If freedom is the key, how do you get that key and hold on to it. When you are free again, PH, how do you think your life will be different? If you value freedom as much as you say, then we know you're going to make some changes to insure it. What will those changes be?**

### I Feel Sad

I feel sad  
because my girl isn't with me  
and it's all bad  
I'm incarcerated  
and now I feel frustrated  
Sending letters  
but I don't get no responses  
probably because they're haters,  
Waiting for a letter all this  
time is hard,  
but now they broke my heart.

-Monotas

**From The Beat: Being separated from the ones you love can be very frustrating, but it is only a temporary condition. Even your "broken heart" can be repaired with time and care. When you get back with your love, just remember the pain you felt when you were separated so that you're not tempted to repeat the behavior that led to your separation in the first place.**



## "I Feel..."

### The Small Box

I feel I am trapped inside a box; I can't smell fresh air anymore. This is not a place you would want to be; I won't be back here.

-LaFranz B2

**From The Beat: What are you going to do or not do to make sure you don't come back? What things are going to be different in your life?**

### I Feel Good

I feel good. Hopefully I'm leaving tomorrow to San Jose. I'm going to a drug program called Advent. I feel confident and determined.

Before, I wasn't ready, but while in CYA, I had a lot of extra time to think. I figured what I'm doing ain't even worth the problems (meaning drugs).

I know off top there's probably gonna be drama 'cause of the place it's located at. Pero, I'm gonna make the best of my stay, and just do what I gotta do. Of course that don't mean I'm gonna stop representin' and banging. Like Tupac said, "Ridin' to the day we die, 'cause dey don't give a . . . about us!"

Anyways, for now, I'm out, and to all my haters, don't hate me, hate the game. I ain't trippin' though 'cause haters and enemies make me stronger. All I gots to say is catch you on the rebound! I'll be out soon. I'm out for now.

-Giggles GU

**From The Beat: We like your attitude about doing your program and addressing your drug issues. The representing part we're less happy about. We wish you the best.**

### Paranoid?

I feel like everybody want to know what I'm thinking. Every time I'm deep in thought, somebody watching me. That's why I don't trust nobody, because I think everybody plotting on me. Maybe it's all in my head, but that's how I feel.

-Leek B5

**From The Beat: We don't know what to tell you, Leek, except that it seems strange to us that you would be the subject of a conspiracy. How long have you felt like this? Why do you think people would be plotting on you?**

### I FEEL REAL GOOD

I feel that I am incarcerated, which I am. I'm the mafi-uso called JD, so listen up and let me express.

I feel real good about myself. How could I say dat while if you know yourself real good, you would take your question back? This here lil' max unit, it ain't nothin' to a boss. This here is just another walk in the park, 'cause I got myself together, no matter what weather is.

Now, I'm ready for the time 'cause I see a better future now.

-JD B5

**From The Beat: How did you get yourself together, JD? What are you going to do keep this "nothin'" from becoming something? What do you see in that "better future"?**

### Rehab Hater

Right now I feel as if I don't like the fact that I'm in rehab. But when I think about it, they are preparing me for the real world, and I got to respect them for that. Just the fact that they come to work every day to put up with us is amazing. So thanks YTEC for helping me.

-Young Skits YTEC

**From The Beat: A very different perspective than what we usually get about programs. In what ways has YTEC helped you? What do you hope to accomplish or learn while you are there?**

### Watchin' Out

I feel I should be on the block with the young thugs. Telling them what is right, because we be doing some dumb shhh. When I was little, I thought holding a gun was cool, even though I have, but a lot of shhh be going on.

Still man, I be trying to do the best I can, but I did not have a job, so I had to steal what I needed. So I was doing shhh that people would not think about, because once I set my mind, I just do it.

So now I am locked down sitting in my cell waiting to get out so I can tell the young boys to keep cool, because this stuff ain't cool.

-Young Fro B2

**From The Beat: Looking out for your people is all well and good, but make sure you look out for yourself, too. Are you going to try to get a job this time around and keep yourself cool?**

**I'm going to a drug program called Advent.**

**I feel confident and determined.**

### Feeling Bad

Right now I'm at the Ranch, and I'm tired of that fake old camp. Every day it's more and more stress.

I feel like God is putting me to the test. I'm messed up in the head, and I'm really feeling bad. I feel like I'm in the cold, left out on my butt.

So I'm trying to stay strong and get through this test. I'm trying to get out and be free and put on my vest to protect my chest.

-Leon B4

**From The Beat: Is there a way to flip this script, Leon? It seems you've been on a downward spiral for a while, now, and it's time you started looking up. Some of what is happening to you is beyond your control, but some of what is happening is well within your control. What can you change that might bring a change in circumstances for you?**

### A Whole Lot Of Nothing

I feel like my life is wastin' away. There's a whole lot of things I could be doin' right now. Man, I could be playin' sports right now, getting a job, getting my driver's license, graduating 10th grade, and whole lot of other stuff man.

I'm supposed to be goin' to a group home, and I've been waitin' for three months and still haven't gone yet. I gotta do one year and six months, so I'm 'a be missin' a lot. And when I get out, I got a lot of catchin' up to do.

-A-Pon B2

**From The Beat: Can any of these things be accomplished while you are at the group home? Do you think serving all this time and missing out on so much will help you do a clean program and stay out for good?**

### How I Feel

I feel good, not 'cause I'm here but 'cause I'm getting out. Did you expect that? No! Time just came my way.

Now I got another chance to get back out there. Did I change? Some things. But some things will never change. Like me getting money ain't gone change. All I'm gone change is the ways. Feel me.

I also feel that it is too many hataz in this world. A lot of people didn't want me to get back out there. The reason why is 'cause they know I pimp shhh and I pimp the Ranch, and a couple of hatin' staff try to pull me down ta they level. But what they don't know is that I'm too high up. They can't touch me.

So smoke a cigarette and drink some coffee, and try ta get on ma level. It is impossible 'cause I dock you.

-Self B1

**From The Beat: First, congratulations on getting out of here. But second, when you commit to the money chase by saying you're only change your methods of getting it, we get very nervous. If you give the system an opportunity to trail you, then you can be sure they'll nail you and jail you.**

### Fed Up

I'm fed up. I feel down, I feel like I'm getting screwed by the system because they say one thing an' do another all tha time.

"We're gonna release the minor on tha 22nd." Well, tha 22nd has passed an' I'm still in here. What a lie! I'm just saying.

-Peter B5

**From The Beat: One thing about "the system" is that waiting for things to happen is a major part of it. We're not saying you should accept everything that happens passively, but we are saying that if you could manage your expectations and increase your patience, things wouldn't get to you as much as they do.**

**I'm messed up in the head, and I'm really feeling bad.**

### It's All Happening At The Zoo

I feel like an animal locked up in a zoo. I feel bad because I'm not with my family.

I feel like I'm ready to go out and make some changes in my life!

-Juicy-Loo B5

**From The Beat: What are those changes you're feeling like making? What will the first step in that plan of change be?**



## "What Does The System Owe You? "

### Time & Freedom

I feel that the system owes me time and freedom, which both mean the same thing.

But I called my mom and told her that I was in Juvenile Hall — that I had kicked my girlfriend, and that the police had brought me here. And I've been here for ten days, going for two more weeks.

I would like to call my girlfriend.

-Juan

**From The Beat: Setting aside all questions of the law and the system, you do know that kicking your girlfriend is not okay, right? What do you think you owe your girlfriend? What do you owe your mom? What do you owe yourself?**

### Took From Me

The system can't give back what it took from me! Nobody can ever give back what I'm talking about, even if they tried.

I'm talking about precious time! The system owes me precious time of freedom — times I could have been kickin' it with m' patna and makin' money and just chillin'.

Like they say, "Time is precious. It waits for no man."

-Big Howard

**From The Beat: Is it the system's responsibility to keep you out on the grind, selling poison to your own kind? No. The system's giving you another chance by going to Camp, and it's up to you to make more responsible plans — and stay free, for keeps!**

### What The System Owes Me!

Basically I feel that the system owes me a lot. First of they owe me 633 dollars in cash when they ran in my house and said they're going to investigate.

Then another time I was shooting dice and they pulled up and took my money and me to jail. I'm not including my scrapers, my van, my dirt bike, but out of all that I don't want nothing but a straight release.

Just this time they took my money and beat my ass. I'm trying to get some riders money, I feel they owe me one more straight one. I'll take it from there. Peace.

-Lil' Joe

**From The Beat: If the system had treated you like a human being, do you think that you'd still feel like they owed you something? Do you think that you were ever treated fairly by the system? Why or why not? Never the less, why do you play with the system? Why do you make yourself such an easy target?**

### I Owe Myself

i owe myself  
to grow up  
in the right way  
and think about  
having a baby  
or being a husband

-Nathan

**From The Beat: Do the growing up first, or things will just get worse.**

### The System Owes

The system and government owe me life and freedom and rights.

The judges owe me another chance to be someone, and I'm going to stand up for my rights.

And the system owes me my grandma!

-Jordan

**From The Beat: Thank you, Jordan, for this serious piece. We feel your determination to be free. And your last line makes your reader feel it personally.**

### WHAT DOES THE SYSTEM OWE ME

The system owes me four months of being in max unit! The judge in Alameda County owe me money from restitution, the school programs and everythin' I did that on the outs straight up.

I think everybody that got snitched on should get straight releases on the real.

The system is a setup; it be whoopin' ninjas, feel me? I feel I was a victim of a crime — ninjas that be snitchin'. Boy, I was cool man gettin' it, so I feel they owe me a release.

-Lil' Rocky

**From The Beat: Do you think that all people who got snitched on should get released or only the ones who are innocent? What do you think should happen to people who think they can do anything and get away with it? Take a look at yourself, 'cause we bet you are far from being an angel.**

## The system can't give back what it took from me!

### THE SYSTEM OWES

me some freedom  
that's what i think  
because i been  
in the system  
way too long  
and i need my family  
to have a cool life

-Mark

**From The Beat: Some of us are practically raised in the system. And if the system takes the place of a parent in our daily life, then maybe the system owes us a parent's help and advice on living free — 'cause that's where we all need to be, living free!**

### What Does The System Owe You

I feel like the system owes me, because they got me in this place and I was doing good when I was playing football. Now that I'm in the system, I'm messed up. But if I can get one more chance, I will do good.

-Danny

**From The Beat: There is always one more chance, one more chance at a good life. You're young. What do you mean that you will do well? When you say the system owes you something, what is it that you are talking about? What does the system have to do in order to give, what it owes you? Did the system really get you in this place? Who is to blame? If you don't take responsibility for your situation, how will being good help?**

### A Better Education

I think the system owes us a better education for the ones that want to expand there brain, even those here in jail.

It's not fair that every one in the Hall has to learn the same thing. Because one out of ten, has a future set for him or her and probably just made a mistake like all juveniles do.

To me, that's the biggest thing I think the system owes us, to the ones that want to better there lives.

-Lil' 9b

**From The Beat: We have to say, that we agree with you Lil' 9b. The education system definitely has room for improvement. How would you change it? What kind of education would the juveniles in the Hall benefit from most? What subjects are you interested in?**

### What Does The System Owe Me?

I feel like the PO's needs to give me more respect.

They need to take the time off and get to know you, instead of when you get out

they want to put you on all these programs and rehabs.

The systems owe me a time

where I can speak my mind without going to trial, you should say your side is what I'm trying to say.

I feel like the system has play' me

because when you are in the hall for some weeks or months, they will steal your clothes and stuff.

The first time when I came to the hall they burnt me for my money.

-B'Z Bo

**From The Beat: That's true, everyone should give respect to each other. Based on some of your writings it seems like you don't seem to have much respect for your freedom or other people. What is up with you? What happened to you that makes you do the things you say you do? Getting to know you could definitely help the system know how to treat you or get you the resources you need. We wish you had more of a voice too but it seems like your actions are speaking way louder than your words.**

### A Release

I think the system owes me a release, my case was very petty, the judge didn't think so.

-David

**From The Beat: David, why did the judge think your case was not so petty? What makes you think it was petty? Does the system owe you anything else other than a release? Do you think that there should be a better system to help youth before they stand before a judge? What would this system be like?**

## I think the system owes us a better education





## "What Does The System Owe You?"

### Freedom

The system owes me freedom off top, 'cause all this time they been giving me ever since I was a young teen.

I done all of it. Every placement I went to I've done my time. I hate when my PO or the counselors be like, "We think he's not ready to go home." So when my time is up, don't hate, congratulate.

-J.R. B4

**From The Beat: When your time is up, we will congratulate, but what will you do for yourself? The true congratulations is owed when you choose a path that won't bring you back here, or to any of the other holes the system has waiting for you. So, our question is: What do you owe yourself?**

### Debts Paid

I feel that the system owes me nothing. The system didn't do a damn thing to me, but give me a reaction to my action. As I was told by an OG, "For every action, there's a reaction." If you do something wrong you get a bad consequence.

-Young Skits YTEC

**From The Beat: Now that you have experienced that firsthand, what's going to be different? What are you going to do to bring about those positive consequences?**

### What The System Owes SEF

The system owe me a lot of stuff. They owe me stuff that they gone owe me for my whole life. The stuff is freedom, family birthdays and holidays.

Only if money could buy all those things back, but it can't. So I got two words for the system. (Unfortunately, The Beat can't print those two words...)

-SEF B1

**From The Beat: The real problem with those words you had for the system is that they have the power to turn that message back onto you — and that's what they're doing right now. Didn't you, SEF, give the system the power over your body by doing whatever you did to get here? What is your responsibility in all this?**

### GIVE ME MY LIFE BACK

The system owes me my life back, and that's fact. They stay stacking money, because I stay doing petty crimes, and I ain't getting a dime. I stay doing time.

I made up my mind that the system can't have me no more, because I didn't win. They scored. Now I'm bored.

I'm mad 'cause I know I messed up and I can't get enough.

I'm doing tough, stay being rough. Stay down, fo' show

-Tiff GU

**From The Beat: What we like is that you're taking your life back by making a promise to yourself to do your program and build a better future. Keep having that attitude and you will leave the system behind for good.**

### Look At Yourself

I want to say that the system owes nobody nothin'. And the reason why is because the system didn't put you in here, you put yourself in here.

I don't know why people be sayin' the system played them. They played themselves for doing something stupid. They wouldn't be saying that if they was on the outs. But being locked up behind closed doors, they be cryin', and sayin' they got played. Ninja, you played yourself.

Oh yeah, the system ain't supposed to be fair. Nothin' is fair in life. That's why the judge, POs, Public Defenders, DAs, and staff be makin' money off us, 'cause we in their house (system). There wouldn't be no system if everybody would've did the right thing. Put it like this, nobody got played. The played themselves, remember that.

-Jay-Baby B4

**From The Beat: If the system is only the criminal justice system, then we agree with you. The only people who the system played are those who didn't do what they were put in the Hall for doing. But isn't the system bigger than just what happens to you after you commit a crime? Is there a system responsible for the condition of the streets you live on? The schools you go to? The services that help provide training for decent employment, for decent housing, for protection from abuse? If you see the system in that larger context, then do you think it owes you anything?**

### The System Don't Owe Me

The system don't owe me shhh, but a free ticket home so I can get my life back cracking like it was. You got no life in here. Once you touch down to the tan pants and green shirt.

-Newt B4

**From The Beat: That life "like it was" that you want back sounds like a prescription for coming back here. There is a lot of truth in the old saying that if you do the same thing and expect a different result, that's one definition of insanity.**

### Givin' It Up

The system owes me my life back. The system has raped me for my freedom. I have no life within life. I have my existence, but that's all. I haven't even got peace of mind, knowing I can't do what I want to do, and make my own decisions.

At his particular moment in life, YTEC is making all the decisions for me, like what time to eat, what time to be here, what time to leave, and last but not least, what time I have to be in the house.

All I want from the system is my life back, and the only way to do that is to complete YTEC, so that's what I'm going to do.

-Pimp-a-licious YTEC

**From The Beat: You say the system raped you, but didn't you invite whatever the system handed out by doing what you did? How should the system have responded? Once you get your life back, how are you going to make sure you don't give it up again?**

### OWES ME NOTHING

The system don't really owe me nothing but another chance and some education. I feel the system owes me another chance because this is my second time getting locked up and now the system is sending me out-of-state.

It might have been some major cases, but I still think the system owes me another chance.

-Bear Weezy B2

**From The Beat: It does sound extreme to send you out-of-state when this is only your second offense. What kind of things should be taken into consideration when giving someone a chance? If your cases are major, maybe it's for the best. Even though the system often seems shady, sometimes they are trying to get you on a different path early, before you get too hectic.**

### The System Owe Me

The system owe me my freedom. I've been sitting here for two extra months. I feel that the DA owes me my freedom because I feel these people just want me here longer. It's not just going good. There are people like me everywhere that are going through this.

Holla if ya hear me!

Juicy-Loo B5

**From The Beat: What do you mean by "two extra months"? What should have happened two months ago? Why do you think "these people" just want you here longer? Is it your charm? Your good looks? Your brilliance? Do you have any responsibility for being where you are? If the system isn't giving you what they owe you, did you give the system what you owe them? What would that be?**

### The System Owes Me Nothing

The system don't owe me anything. The system can never give me back all the time I've ever been in here.

Sometimes, I think the system should give me an apology, but even that wouldn't tickle my fancy, because that still wouldn't be enough.

All the system owes me really is one of them yellow slips that say permanent release with my name on it.

-Afro B4

**From The Beat: We hope you get that yellow slip real soon, Afro. Do you think you were cheated out of anything from society — the system — before you ever came to juvenile hall? Could society have done anything for you as a child that would have given you more opportunities to succeed? What?**

### Pay Me

Basically, the system owes me my freedom back. I don't know about anybody else, but to me, each day being on probation counts a lot.

Just imagine all them days you're missing out chilling with the homies, being out as long as you want, and just having hella fun. Sadly, I can't really do all that no more. And just to think about it, everybody out there on probation feels like they ain't got no life, which we don't.

We can't do a damn thing once we in that system. That's a shame, especially those that don't deserve it. But all I know is that the system, the POs and the judges, owe me my life back. All they want to do is assume that you all bad with a drug problem. Even though they think it, they don't know.

I'm really tired of being in this system though. That's why I'm gonna do my thang, and show the system and everybody else that wanna hate that I can get myself out of this since off top, they can't.

-Christine YTEC

**From The Beat: We have news for you: You put yourself on probation, The System didn't make you do whatever you got arrested for the first time, second time or third time. What would you be doing if you weren't at YTEC right now? Would you be going to school, working, doing what you need to do? Or would you be hanging out, and doing things you shouldn't be doing? If it's the latter, maybe you owe The System for keeping you out of trouble.**

### I Want To Learn

The system owes me an education. These teachers up at YGC are fake as hell. I ain't learn nothin' up in here.

I need to get the hell out if here. When I am at school on the outs, I get a good education and learn hella stuff that I didn't know. I like to learn whatever they teach me, especially social studies and history.

So stay the hell out of Juvenile Hall. Stay Up.

-Anthony B1

**From The Beat: It's a double tragedy to be taken out of a learning situation you like, and where you learn, and put into a learning situation that you hate, and where you don't learn. How do you keep yourself educated? What books do you read? Are there others who can act like teachers to you, even if they aren't real teachers?**

### What Does The System Owe Me?

The system owes me a fat-ass check for the stress and pain they put on me.

-Raven GU

**From The Beat: Hmm . . . have you put any of this stress on yourself?**



# Weekly Writings

San Francisco County

Volume 9.14

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## JOHN 3:29

I think people should see John 3:29 in the Bible because He gave his life for us. It says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

We doing wrong by the stuff we do, and then when we do something wrong we always praying for help. We should have thought about it before we did it.

People don't pick up a Bible and pray until they get into these facilities. I was the same. So if you could just pick up the Bible and read it one time, look for John 3:29. You can believe what you want to believe, but everybody should at least read it.

-Bo B4

**From The Beat: Now that you have read this quote from the Bible, how will it change the way you live your life? Will you be able to remember your advice when you get out of here? What will you have to give up in order to follow the teachings of the Bible? What will you gain?**

## ON THE BLOCK

On the block, man, it is hot. The block is not cool right now, so I'm trying to stay out the way. But I still be on the block all day with all the homies.

I miss the homies that is in the Halls, and I miss all the homies that's six-feet under. I just hope no more homies get killed. To the homies in the Halls, keep your head up.

-Young Mont YTEC

**From The Beat: What are you going to do to make sure you are not like the homies that are six feet under? Knowing the risks involved with being on the block, why do you still kick it out there? Is it possible to kick it with your folks from the block somewhere neutral where y'all can't get into any beef or locked up?**

## JUST A SAMPLE

My first time I got locked up I was in Co-ed with the girls. It was crackin' for a few days. I was thinking about calling my parents, but then I didn't call no one until I got released.

When I had court, I didn't even know my parents was gonna come. But they showed up, and I got released in five days. I told myself I would never come back, but instead I came back a few more times like a dumb butt.

-Phu Quy YTEC

**From The Beat: Now what are you telling yourself? What's going to happen once you're out of YTEC's watchful eye? Do you think YTEC is doing a good job in getting you ready to do what you need to do? If you keep coming back, then you know what brings you here — and what you have to stop doing to stay out of here, right?**

## Goin' Back

I'm just another Vietnamese soldier  
Stuck in this place  
Suckers get me mad when they get in my face  
Makes me wanna catch a case  
But I ain't and I can't  
Because I'm stuck in the woods  
Miss the day I used to be in the 'hood  
In the Ls making money off crack sales  
With big clientele  
But I'll see it in July  
Blowing big dank getting high

-Jaydah LCRS

**From The Beat: If you go back to your old ways you can expect to find yourself back at The Ranch or somewhere worse, unless you think — like so many slaves we know locked in the big prisons they have waiting for you — that you can do the same as before without facing the same consequences as before. Why would you want to go back to risking your freedom after you just spent a bunch of time locked down? Is there no other way for you to get your bread than by taking advantage of peoples addictions, and helping them destroy themselves?**

## Find Freedom

Be free when you're locked up. The way you find freedom is you have to find God. Not just sayin' you found God, and don't really mean it. But you have to find God in your heart, and soul.

God can really set you free. He can save your life. He can rescue you from the streets and the many evils that occur in life. If you follow the ways of Jesus and the Bible and all it's teachings, you can change your life around, and release all of your bad habits and old ways.

God can forgive you for all your sins you committed. Even if you killed somebody, God will forgive you and reconcile you.

To all those incarcerated, take some time and start reading the Bible, and I bet you will start feeling good about yourself. Then as time progresses, you will notice changes about you. Then you will have true faith in you, and you will be free.

Also if you live with God by your side you will never get locked up again, because you will put those old ways behind you. And when you pray at night, God will truly answer your prayers if you have faith in Him and yourself. So pray every night, and morning thanking the Lord you lived another day.

-R.Jae YTEC

**From The Beat: Can somebody do good in life without having God, or any type of religion? What would be the difference between a person who prays every day that's successful, and an atheist that's successful? Is there only one path to God, or many?**

## At Hard Times

At hard times I need money,  
At hard times I need love,  
At hard times I need weed,  
But all I get is blood.  
My hard time is in here,  
Sometimes I get mad,  
Try to put on a mad face an mug  
But it's nothing, because at hard times  
It's always good times.

-Jamoe B4

**From The Beat: Can you explain how hard times are always good times? Are you being sarcastic? If these are the hard times, do you plan any changes in your life on the outs to avoid repeating these hard times? If not, we can predict you'll be right back here writing about hard times...**

## I Don't Owe Them, They Don't Owe Me

I don't think I owe the system anything, but I don't think they owe me. They have done nothing for me and don't think I have ever done a thing for them.

-Mike B5

**From The Beat: What is "the system" to you? Have you ever gone to school? If so, then we can say the system gave you something, and you gave them something. Has your family ever benefited from welfare, unemployment insurance, or food stamps? All of those are things the system gives. What else can you think of?**

## Don't Care About What Somebody Say

Reason for this is because me and my crime homies up here be talkin' about each other's wify and when we talk about other people's girls, it seems as though they get mad and try to make it seem more harsh then it already is.

I don't get mad and emotional over dumb stuff like that. It just kinda reminds me of a female. My female cry and get mad, but I just laugh at it and agree to whatever they have to say. It just really irks their nerves. It's not just detainees, it also be staff. They can't handle the pressure any more than a five-year-old toddler. My little brother more mature than some of these people in here that's sixteen or seventeen years old, and he just became a teenager.

So that's all a shame for someone that young to not trip off stupid stuff like that. But my attitude is like this, "If you havin' girl problems, I feel sorry fo' you, son I got 99 problems and a female ain't one." Some of these people just hate that, but it's nothing to a boss.

-Cudabeez B5

**From The Beat: What do you think staff could or should do to "handle the pressure" better? We've never known anyone who didn't have female problems, at least from time to time. If you really are "female-problem-free," you should write a book of instruction. You'd make a million.**

## Hear Us Out

First, there was two sets of footprints in the sand.  
Then it was one set of footprints in the sand.  
When times get hard and stuff hit the fan  
God don't walk with me, He carry me, Man.

I just want to say thank you to The Beat Within for letting us write what's on our mind. I think they should let more than just the halls read it. I think they should put like 100 Beats in the free newsstands so the city can see what's on our minds in here.

They need to drop some off at the police station, so they can see what's on our mind because they are the ones that send us here.

But I would like to say thank you, Beat, for giving us a chance to say what's on our mind.

-Lil Dakota B4

**From The Beat: We think your suggestions of putting out Beats in the free newsstands and dropping some off at the police station are both good ideas. If we had more money, we could get The Beat into a lot more hands than read it now. We appreciate the kind words you have for us, but without you, there is no Beat Within. So, it's for us to say thank you for putting it down week after week.**

## 18 Months

18 months like that, that's how they do me.  
It's cool. I'm gon' knock that out.

But then I can't do it because they only gave me two choices, Glen Mills or ROP. I chose Glen Mills because I think it's better for me in basketball and football.

But 18 months with no family, girls, my homies — Damn!

What's the world coming to?

Man, I'm like Mike Tyson. I knock ninjas out like I'm going to knock out this program. I can do it. I know I can. One love...

-Wal-greens B4

**From The Beat: We know you can knock the program out, but we hope that by knocking it out, you take whatever benefit you can get. A program is more than just the time you put into it, it's also the skills, services and new thinking you get out of it. The real goal is not to have to come back to any part of the criminal justice system. Is that goal within your power?**

**I think they should put like 100 Beats in the free newsstands so the city can see what's on our minds in here.**





## Another Chance

Well, the system owes me another chance. I think the system owes me and my daughter free health care. They owe me a new school system, 'cause I wanna learn what I wanna learn. They should clean Hunters Point, make it a better place. The system owes me, anybody, a free call, to anyone we want. I want to call the people I love in my life.

That's the end of that chapter.

-Charmela GU

**From The Beat:** If you were given a second chance by the system, what would you do with it? How would you change what you've been doing?

## WE ALL WE GOT

What's up? Me? Living the B4 life the best I can. About to knock 18 months out fo' I can do my thing when I get out, start over and live my life the way I want it, like getting into real estate, and not the way my PO want it.

About to go to George Jr. in Pennsylvania with my homies. It's a baby college at Glen Mills, and I'll be shining on the basketball and football team.

-Rock Star B4

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you've scoped out your situation with the idea of making the best out of it. That's all any of us can do. But don't just shine on the courts, shine at that baby college, too.

## Confessions Of A Sinner (Part 2)

My confessions of Smith & Wessons  
And bullet proof vests  
Cocaine and drugs aimin'  
In my family's direction  
Everybody wanna beef  
So everybody carry protection  
That's why they carry  
Teflon tips  
So it can rip through their vest  
Packin' lead & minerals  
I can't lie

The only time I went to church  
Was for the funerals  
Befo' I go to the pen  
My confessions of my sins

-Byron Beez & Jamoe B4

**From The Beat:** We had to take out about eight lines of this painful poem When you went to church for the funerals, did you feel like a hypocrite? Do you think you'll continue as before once you get out of here, or do you plan to make some changes? What?

## INTERVIEW WITH M.REEZY AND ZOOMUNGUS

M.Reezy: What's good wit' you?

Zoomungus: Just chillin' anotha day without a dolla.

M.Reezy: Fa real, fa real. These khakis is feelin' empty.

Zoomungus: Yeah, just like after I sweep and mop my room.

M.Reezy: Bet you wasn't sweepin' and moppin' on the outs.

Zoomungus: Yeah, true that. It's like Nike. I just do that. To all y'all positive folks be positive cause only you can prevent forest fires

M.Reezy: Nah, fa real on the positive tip, join me in an AA meeting. Ain't no shame in my game. Stay up!

-M.Reezy, Zoomungus B5

**From The Beat:** Sorry, MR and Z, we took out ill will because his was not a real part of your "interview." (That's why we took out the interruption about the female; it didn't fit.) If you're going to do interviews, do real interviews about real things. An interview attempts to find information, it isn't just a formless conversation. For example, an interview may be about what led someone here, or what someone was doing before he got here, or what someone plans to do after he leaves here. We're cutting you a break by publishing this somewhat meaningless piece (except for the excellent advice about AA). So now, cut us a break and write something serious.

## NOTHING

The system don't owe me nothing. I got myself in these difficult situations. I just basically have to deal wit' the consequences, but sometimes they can be cruel to most youngsters and send them far away.

-L GU

**From The Beat:** If you ask for nothing, that is what you'll get, which may be the right approach with the system. But, as you say, no one should be treated cruelly. Can you imagine a situation where it might be a good idea to send someone far from home?

## GETTING MONEY

Money is a powerful thing. That's why most of us is in jail, or not even here today. But to tell you the truth, I will do anything to get rich, from standing on my block selling, to putting a gun in a ninja's face telling him to give up.

Whoever made money most was mad at somebody. Money can make a man into a woman. Money is something that everybody want and before I die I'm gone get a million. I don't how, maybe from the street or maybe from a job. I don't think I'm gone get it from a job because I'm gon' keep it gangsta.

-Lil Dakota B4

**From The Beat:** Does the Bible mean anything to you? It says that "the love of money is the root of all evil," and it sounds like you really love money. If that love of money has led you here (how many times?), then what makes you think it won't lead you here again (or some place worse)? Could you be satisfied with less than a million? If not, we think your future will consist mainly of wishing, regretting, and wondering "what if?".

**to tell you the truth,  
I will do anything to  
get rich,  
from standing on  
my block selling, to  
putting a gun in a  
ninja's face telling  
him to give up.**

## Down

Man, I been down since June 12th 2002. I've almost completed all my time at Log Cabin Ranch. I am so close to leaving and I'm almost 18. I am threw with jail. I want my freedom back.

-Jr B4

**From The Beat:** Well, this answers our question about what you owe yourself. If you've promised yourself before that you're through with the system, what makes it different this time?

## My Medicine

Some ninjas be like, what's beef? Some be like, what's weed? Weed is actually medicine for me. You know every four hours like a prescription I'm smoking, just holdin' the smoke down to keep from making me choke.

I'm like one of those café mugs...I'm in love. And after we smoke the first L, I feel like I still need bud. I smoke more than Cheech and Chong. My best friend is a bong and my homies is smokas only.

I know one day I'm goin' stop, but that goin be the day my seeds don't pop 'cause weed help me get my thoughts together quick. On the other hand as soon as I'm sober, I forget.

Shhh. I'm still stuck at point A, ya dig, and my momma think that I should quit.

-Morph Dirt B5

**From The Beat:** If it's all good, then why do you plan to quit some day? We think you know that all that marijuana can't be good for you. Your lungs are definitely feeling it, and who knows what your brain is feeling. (Some of that forgetfulness may be traced to smoking.) Of course, we can't tell you what to do or not to do, but we can say that you should be aware of all the consequences of whatever you do. Even if we can agree that some of the consequences of smoking weed can be therapeutic ("weed is actually medicine for me"), some other consequences are not so beneficial. Just own up to all of it.

## My Mama

The first person I called when I got locked up was my momma, and I asked her to call my auntie 'cause she was the only person that would have got me out of this situation.

-L GU

**From The Beat:** Guess it didn't work. We hope you get out soon.

## Don't Worry

My first phone call was to my mom. I told the truth about what happened, and explained the situation the best that I could. I told her not to worry about me, and that I would be fine.

-Lucas B5

**From The Beat:** And are you fine?

## NOT AN ADDICT

I ain't no dope friend. I smoke weed like crazy, but I don't play around about other much stronger drugs. I thizz, but smoke. Thrax, mushrooms, PCP, dust and so on is a total hell no, just out of the question I mean my ninjas do it, but it has not worn off on me one bit.

I can't stand the smell of some of the shhhh, I mean cooked up dope. It sometimes has a distinct smell to it, but when you around people and you personally cook it, the smell does not get to you. That's why I'm good. I stick to hydro.

I first hit the weed wit' my dad at six actin' hell a funny. It was not a thang to me. But after my pops got killed, like three years later, I started smokin' more heavy. Then I stopped. Then, after the song by 11-5 come out — "Everybody light yo' Vega, everybody light yo' Veegaa, everybody smoke" — it just light weight inspired me to start back. So ever since then, I been smokin' 'dro.

I know a whole lot of people still smoke out there 'cause weed is not as bad as any other drug. Weed keeps you mellow, not on a crazy trip, but that's basically why I chose to smoke 'dro. So before any of you ask me why I smoke, first ask yo' self.

I'm gon' stay up for everybody that's fightin' chimney cases. Roll the dice and hit seven or eleven.

-Cudabeez B5

**From The Beat:** Well, some people would check you for smoking weed, and, to be fair, it's not all good. Anything you put in your lungs will have a negative effect over time. Also, starting to use a drug (or even medications regularly) when you're just six years old is bound to affect brain development which continues even through your teen years. On the other hand, we have seen the devastation that some drugs cause, including alcohol, and we can't disagree with you that weed has some benefits the rest do not.





## The Flag

Tha flag that fans America, it shines high. It never disappoints. The red is my blood, the white is my death, and blue is how I feel right now.

-Peter B5

**From The Beat: Do you know what the colors of the flag are really supposed to stand for?**

## Get Out

I'm trying to get out of the system because I'm tired of being in the system. I need to get off probation for me and my child because I'm not trying to come back in here.

But it's like every time I get out, the staff say, "Well, you'll be back." God please help me to change.

-Deshay GU

**From The Beat: Can you start making a plan while you're in the Hall, figuring out what you need to do and not so**

## My B-Day

Man, my b-day is on Sunday. I am in here, got to look at these people, but I'm gon' see if I can get a home pass on Friday. If I get a home pass, I'm goin' to come back on time to make it look good for me on the eleventh.

I don't have time to be running, so I am going to come back, but you feel a brotha, I have to go, because I'm in class right now. I have to do it in class because I am on BMP, but I be back.

-J-Stub B2

**From The Beat: How will you deal with all your folks in your face talking about let's do this, let's smoke that? There are going to be temptations in front of you, how will you fight them off? This is something you'll need to figure out when you're released for real.**

**If I get a home pass, I'm goin' to come back on time to make it look good for me on the eleventh.**

## Too Deep

Man, people be telling me, J-Stub, you dyin' to get out of the game, but I be like I am too deep. Like right now, I do not think I can go somewhere but to my block.

In some people's eyes I am a lil' kid, but really, you don't know me like that, 'cause if you was from my block, you will know how I get down.

-J-Stub B2

**From The Beat: The fortunate thing is that you can change, you aren't in too deep — there is no such thing. But from what you write, it sounds like you don't want to change. Why? Is it the rush, the money, drama at home, depression? What is it about the game that makes you willing to put your freedom and your life on the line? Do you ever imagine yourself getting away from the heat?**



## United Playaz

(For Everyone That Live In The Bay)

That's the gang I represent.

Let me tell you how it is

'Cause I feel that everyone should participate

First let me introduce you to the director of the program

His name is Rudy Corpuz

But I call him Uncle Rudy

'Cause he treats me like a ruby

I'll go to him every time I need that someone to talk to 'cause he never acted like he was moody.

He's the type that doesn't judge you.

He respects your feelings

And tries to understand what you're going through

He treats everyone equal

No matter what skin color you are.

You could be from outer space

And he'll still treat you the same way.

Well, let me move on and tell you how United

Playaz is known throughout the Bay.

Different people would get recruited every day.

If you was down to change yo' life around

We would take you in with no questions asked.

See, this ain't the type of gang that stood on the block

Lookin' for our people to kill with our drugs.

We stayed on the block lookin' for our people that needed hugs.

United Playaz is a violence prevention program

It's good support when you're feeling like you're in a jam.

So if you're ready to fly that kite,

Look for United Playaz and hit up Bernal Heights!

(515 Cortland Ave, San Francisco, CA 94110)

-Jazze GU

**From The Beat: Nice tribute to United Playaz, Jazze. They are a great organization and those Corpuz brothers are the bomb. We really appreciate the positive mindset you are bringing to The Beat and, more importantly, to your life. If you're not going to be seeing Rudy, let us know and we'll send him this Beat.**

## No Use

Damn, I'm up at the Ranch, but it's coo'. This shhh ain't helpin' me for shhhh. This is weak, and I ain't tryin' to change. I'ma always be the same, just play my game smarter, 'cause ninjas out there are bangin' hatin' even harder.

-Lil' Weasel LCRS

**From The Beat: What do you want to come out of your time at the Ranch? Do you really think you're going to be the same in five years, ten years, thirty years? If you don't plan on changing, you can definitely expect to lose your freedom again. And the places they have waiting for you are not only much worse than the Ranch, they are filled with people who believed they could play the game smarter...**

## One Day

One day I woke up

The early mist of fog

Must have woke me up

Freeway hummin' cars horns honking

Throw tha balcony door open,

An SS Impala flirtin' teens was dumping

Stanky breath and odor

I had to get rid

The smell of fresh drank fills the air

Walk down the stairs

See bro-in-law at the bottom

In his underwear, cooking breakfast

Go back upstairs, to the shower

End up having a sex fest

Guru moaning, birds chirping

So fresh, so clean now,

I plan to start my journey now,

Count a couple hund's form my profit

Put the rest back in the safe in the closet

Reach for my keys, but I stop

And thought I rather hop the bus

Today and I left the weapon and vest

I put somethin' on so I'll be stuntin'

Gave big sis a kiss good bye and tuck

My girlfriend under the covers

I walk out that door. Wonder how

I ended up here with nothing

-Jd B5

**From The Beat: This is an intriguing piece, JD. Your style of writing makes us want to know a lot more because you just put down the minimum amount to set your mood. We'd like to know, for example, what the connection is between your story of morning, of love, of breakfast, and your ending up here "with nothing." We're also curious about that journey you say you're planning to start now. Where do you see that journey taking you? How will you get there?**

## True Love For My Family

The reason why I got true love for my family is because they got true love for me. Even my friends that I call family got true love, like my folks Phill, Just Blaze, Buddy, Rich, J-Killa, Bear, Thunyer, M-Kada, Big Head Rob, Nel, Lee, Scotty, Lil' Wood, and my brother, Dollah. I am going to love them till the day I die and I just want to let them know I'm holding it down and that I love them.

To all my people that's in the walls holding it down, I love y'all and stay up.

-Nene B2

**From The Beat: We feel what you're saying, Nene, but do you ever wonder about the love y'all have for each other when that love is contributing to each other's destruction by beefing and helping each other get locked up? Can you imagine building more positive lives together?**

## Trap

The system is a very corrupt and messed up system. They put them guns and drugs in our community, and then incarcerate those who had nothing and couldn't fight the temptation. You put some mouse near dat cat, don't expect it to not eat it, feel me.

-A B2

**From The Beat: We feel what you're saying, but not everyone in the 'hood gets caught up in the game. What's the difference between who can resist these temptations and who can't? Is it possible for you to resist? Can you look past those things and try to get something you know won't catch you up? Good writing by the way; next time give us even more.**

**See, this ain't the type of gang that stood on the block Lookin' for our people to kill with our drugs. We stayed on the block lookin' for our people that needed hugs.**



## CHANGE

The system will not change, if you don't do what the judge told you to do the system will not say, let it go. The only one who will change is yourself.

-Mei B2

**From The Beat: Very true, you are the only one who can change you. Now what are you going to do to change? What do you think needs to change?**

## Thank You

Thank you for your love  
Thank you for your hugs  
Thank you for being there  
When no one else cared

Thank you for good memories and  
What seemed like years  
Even though we been through a lot  
We're both still here

Thank you for havin' hecka patience  
I miss you so much all I could do  
Is read your letters and smell your  
fragrance

Thank you for stayin' with me  
When everyone else was displeased

You were the one who took me in  
When I was left with nothin' in the cold  
wind  
You are like a brother  
You are my best friend  
You loved me like no other  
And my love for you will never end . . .  
(Dedicated to Poppy)

-Lil' Asia GU

**From The Beat: Nice poem. We really hope this time this guy's for real.**

## Dear Boy Next Door

You said that you loved me  
You told me that you would never leave  
Now I am looking back,  
I was only a fool enough to believe you  
now that time has gone away  
and I know that you are just a phone call  
away  
I just wish that things were the same when  
we first met  
you made things sound so sweet  
it's only hurting me now that time has gone  
away it's time for me to say goodbye  
to the love that was never once shared  
(dedicated to Currington Boo)

-Young Kristian GU

**From The Beat: Things are not always what they seem, as you've learned. Are you taking any lessons away from this situation? Will you be more careful about love in the future?**

## WE'RE MEANT TO BE

Me and you, we're meant to be,  
so one day we will reunite and live a beautiful life.  
We're far apart, but still as one  
and you can have my heart because we're meant to be.  
One plus one is two, not three  
so let it just be you and me,  
sharing a love no one else can see.  
I'm happy with you,  
you're happy with me  
and that's why I say we're meant to be.  
We're meant to be, that's me and you  
No one knows what it is our relationship goes through  
but me and you.

Baby, I love you and that is so true,  
the way I feel for you, it makes me feel brand new  
Baby, all I know is that I was meant to be with you!  
-Mercedes GU

**From The Beat: Keep this love in mind, Mercedes, but don't forget to pay a lot of attention to yourself at the same time.**

## WHAT'S LIFE ALL ABOUT?

Sitting in my cell 24 hours a day, seven days out of the week, saying damn, to myself, "Where has my life gone?"

Only knowing that the future is near, still not knowing what G.O.D has in store for me. Getting shipped off to Colorado, separated from my loved ones only in due time will I find out what life is all about.

-Young Kristian GU

**From The Beat: Being locked up can seem like a waste of your life, Kristian, but you're still young enough to make a positive future for yourself. What would you like life to be about?**

## My Life

My life was like a comic book,  
you could just turn the page  
and see what road I was headed down.

It was called destruction.

What a life I was leading for myself.

My life,

My life.

I'm glad I made it to see another day  
and I got a chance to make my life really real. Now I can  
say my life is real.

I have lived in this cruel world for a minute  
and I have shed many tears.

They were tears of sorrow and joy.

I'm lucky I made it this far.

I got my life back and that's why I say,

"My life is really real."

-Mercedes GU

**From The Beat: Ah, it's sad to be putting these pieces in The Beat Within instead of The Beat Without. Now that you're back in the Hall, do you still see your life as real?**

**I sit and wonder  
when I will  
feel the  
beautiful love we  
shared again**

## Self Hate

I hate being Black because it seems like every White person is against me. That is why I do what I do, feel me.

-Issy B1

**From The Beat: Well, we don't know what you do, so we can't exactly feel that last sentence. But we definitely feel the first one, and it makes is both angry and sad — angry that anybody would treat you badly for something as superficial and surface as skin color, and sad that you have internalized their hatred and turned it on yourself. To hate being Black is to hate yourself, and that is not right. If others can't see the beauty in your blackness, that should be their problem, and not yours.**

## BEAUTIFUL DAYS

The beautiful days are now no more,  
being away from you makes my heart sore.  
I wonder every day, why do I have to feel this way?

Why does my heart have to ache  
with the strongest pain and the deepest passion  
for a love strong as yours?

I sit and wonder when I will feel the beautiful love we shared again  
Or when our time will come to be happy again.

Baby, all I hope and wish for is me and you being together again.

I'm used to you always here to hold me, kiss me, and take care of me when I'm down and out,  
but now that we are not together, I don't see the beautiful days anymore.

Tell me where did the beautiful days go and when will they come once more?

-Mercedes GU

**From The Beat: Beautiful poem, Mercedes. Seems like the only solution to the pain you feel about being apart is to work on yourself and how you're living so that you'll be living right and free when he returns.**

## Getting Out, Staying Out

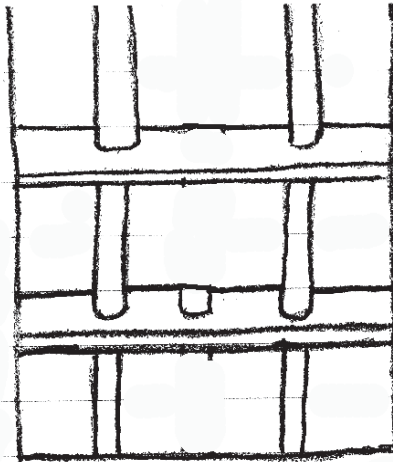
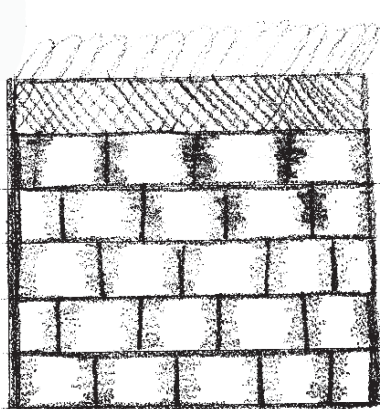
Man, I'm getting out after doing ten months — eight months in the Ranch and two months in the halls.

All for what? For the number one addiction I got. That's money. In order to stay out I got to get new ways to get it, 'cause I can't be no broke ninja in this so-called free world.

I'm out. Getting out, and gone stay out 'cause I'm gone stay motivated by all the hatin'-ass people that don't want to see a young boss shine.

-Sef B1

**From The Beat: We definitely want to see a young boss shine, but in a way that doesn't risk his freedom or his life. What's your plan for staying out? What are you going to do first?**





## I Ain't Tripping

What's up, Beat? I go to court tomorrow. I might go to Camp or to a group home. My PO is recommending a group home. I ain't tripping as long as I don't go too far.

Y'all at The Beat wrote back to me, telling me to make new friends at school. But I don't go to school! And I do my own thing anyway. My friends don't control me.

To all locked up in Alameda County Juvenile Hall, be safe! I'm out.

-Lil' Creep

**From The Beat: Then we talked about this piece, and you admitted that when you're running with your friends, you might do something to show them how hard you are, or how down you are, or fearless. That's what we mean, not robotics.**

## Soklok's Back

Yeah, I'm back to The Beat. It's day three hundred and thirty-six, yadamean? Jus' hangin' on like a boss.

Jus' wanted to say — it's gettin' worse and worse! It's a jungle out here. Jus' a warrior not a solja, but a warrior. Jus' wantin' to say what is it to those in max!

-Soklok

**From The Beat: Glad to have you back at Camp, that's for sure! But if it's getting worse out there, you've got to get better — not badder! Unless you want to be no wiser but even sadder.**

## My Weekend

my weekend was hella coo' i got to see my grandparents and kick it with my folks charlie and my brother too otherwise i maintained myself and came back to camp to all stay up

-Lil' Rickie

**From The Beat: Hey, that's a blessing to be able to go see grandparents over the weekend, other family and friends, too.**

## WAITING

What's crackin' with y'all out there. This' young Gato coming at you. I'm just chillin' right here, just waiting for something to pop off; 'cause you've always got to stay on your toes.

Up in here all I have is my self-respect, and if you are solid you keep it. Also when you're in here, you can't have weak mind. If you do, this shhh will eat you alive! So remember all this. I tell you so you can keep it in mind.

So to all in the Hall, Camp and CYA, stay up. Much respect. And I'm out.

-Young Gato

**From The Beat: Don't be so afraid of appearing weak that you're unwilling to see that a life in the penitentiary is nowhere to be. To keep your self-respect doesn't mean a stubborn refusal to think about alternatives to a banging death-style; in truth, it means just the opposite, if you're ready to see it!**

## WHAT IS WORTH GIVING UP YOUR FREEDOM?

Well, I think what I bang is worth giving up my freedom. And my family my little sister and my Aunt Jami and my bros.

Mostly if anything was to happen to one of them, I would go crazy. I would end up getting life in the pen. So it's mostly my family.

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: Are the things you live for the same things that you'd die for?**

## Shhhh I Am Thankful For

The things that I am thankful for is my life

I am thankful for my aunt Jami because she is the only one that has ever come visit me every weekend and when I was at Camp she used to pick me up every weekend.

I am thankful for the roof she puts over my head too.

I am thankful for my little sister and my bros too.

I am thankful for my grandma even though she be hatin' on me sometimes.

I thankful for my homies and my 'hood.

I thankful for being alive another day.

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: How do you show the things you are thankful for appreciation? How can you make your Aunt Jami proud of you? Does she accept the choices you make?**

## What's Up

This Lil' Leo in the Hall, and I just want to tell all of you— don't let this stuff get you down. We will all be out soon. So keep your head high and stay up. One love.

-Lil' Leo

**From The Beat: Are you feeding yourself that lie again, that you and all your friends will get soon? It's just not true. Some will be locked up for a long time, 'cause they keep falling for that same old line — and waste their last chance without even trying!**

## It Ain't Cool

What's up, Beat? I just wanna say to the ones on the outs, it ain't cool being locked up.

We got too many homeboys in jail. But it's 'cause we do what we do. And to tell the truth, jail and PO's don't even change me. I don't know what does.

-Lil' Creep

**From The Beat: It's a sad, sad thing if you can't learn from pain and unhappiness — 'cause if you don't learn how to avoid it, guess what you get? More pain and more unhappiness!**

## My Life

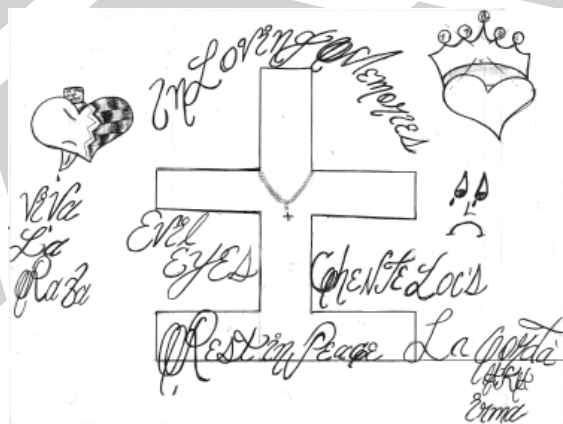
Rest in peace to Critty Bo, that's my big brother. Yo, it's me, Lil' Day Day. Dude, I got shot a few times an' it wasn't cool.

Dude, an' it's me an' Corn-Freaky in here. Yo, an' you know we ain't listenin'. Dude, my life is like messed up an' I can't really think. Dude, I lost Bar Bar, A-N-T, an' Lil' JJ!

See, I'm mad as you would be if you lost a loved one. I know it's the way we live, but sometimes I don't give a what. RIP Mike, Lil' JJ, Critty Bo, ANT, MAT, Grewdy — it's me, Lil' Day Day.

-Lil' Day Day

**From The Beat: Everything about the life you were living makes it hard to think clearly. Of course you're mad you've lost loved ones — but get mad at a game that's killing friends and enemies alike. Get mad enough to quit, change your life and go legit. RIP martyrs to the street.**



## Free Jason

What's up? It's me, Lil' Jason. I'm back in the hall. I had run from Camp and got another case.

I go to court on Wednesday, praying to God that I will get out. But I know I'm not getting out, because of the judge in #151. Still, if God is with me, I will!

I just want to say, what's up, to my bro. I love you, man. I see you across the way in the next unit. I'm praying for you and hoping you will beat your trial. God is with you and me, and he don't want to see his children go down the wrong path. So pray for me, and I'll pray for you, bro!

To all of my Black people — stay out of jail. God is with us. He is always watching us. So pray every night and your wish will come true. It's me, Lil' Jason; and I'm out. Free Jason! Rest In Peace: Jerry, Dre, Zilliun, Tank, ROP.

-Lil' Jason

**From The Beat: Remember that God is not down with riding for your turf. Don't let that list of those who have died, become another badly thought-out reason to ride. And if you say, I can't ride 'cause I'm locked here inside — we're saying that taking God's path starts with the state of mind to match. Pray for the strength to change all those old behaviors that create pain.**

## The Hall

The Hall is not nothing to me because I been coming here since I was nine years old. But in a way it is something, because I am stressing about being home with my family, not in here.

So that's why it is something in a way.

-Lil' Marcus

**From The Beat: What's more important to you — your family or the forces that bring you to Juvenile Hall? You answer should take priority in your life.**

## I Don't Know Why

I don't know why people cry when they come to the Hall because if they did not do what they did they would not be in here.

I can understand sometimes, but me, I should be the one crying because I've been here five months so I should be the one who should be crying. But I can't because I am from Oakland.

-Lil' Marcus

**From The Beat: It's okay to cry, nobody has to see you cry or watch you cry. Can you try to find a way to freedom, peace and happiness?**

## Baby's Mama

I been with this girl for about two years strong and still going! And since I been with her, I been locked up twice.

But this time is going to be the longest time away from her, and I can't stand it! It has started to get to me. I hope and pray that she will be all right in them streets.

She's my baby! And she's going to have my baby — and soon! And I know it takes money, but a child is God's gift. I love her and will always take care of Minty Eyes. Love, Daddy. Be home soon.

-Domo

**From The Beat: Everybody knows money is important in raising a child, but not everyone acts like they know it's more important to be there, offering your child guidance, care, and loving attention. Don't let the paper chase keep sending you to lockdown. Make this incarceration your last go 'round. You're soon to be a father!**





## What You In Here Fo'?

[T = Mat; C = Corn Freaky; D = Day Day]  
T — What you in here fo'?  
C — Punchin' a person at McClymonds.  
D — Had a warrant for Camp.  
T — I served a decoy.

-Mat, Corn Freaky & Day Day

**From The Beat: You've got to change your ways, or keep getting locked up for this sort of stupid stuff. Rebuild from the bottom up.**

## MI AMOR, POR QUE TE AMO

when i first saw you mija  
my heart belonged to you  
and sabes chula my life my feelings  
are all depending on you mi amor  
'cause you're my chula and my first real love  
i want you to believe me because  
i'm really keeping it true reyna  
chaless chula i need you in my life  
another day without you just can't be mija  
i just can't stand another day without you mi amor  
i'm that one that you satisfy  
we look into each other's eyes  
and you're beautiful you're so fine  
and i cannot lie mi reyna  
you know we will strive  
i will always be alive  
to look at your beautiful eyes  
and god knows i will survive  
only if you're in my life  
and when you leave my eyes will be surprised  
because i thought that this love would never die  
mi amor por que te amo  
i want to let you know that i will protect you  
with all my heart no matter what the situation is mija  
just 'cause i'm your lover  
and i'll die for you mi reyna  
baby i can't get over the first time we kissed  
i felt so good mija and i will never forget it  
and baby i can't get enough of your loving  
when i first touched you i never wanted to let go of you  
i thought i was dreaming it felt like i was in shock  
then i knew it was true  
but mija i just wanted to say i really love you  
but i guess you don't believe me  
but chula i just can't get enough of you  
por que te amo mucho maira

-Chiquilin

**From The Beat: Why won't she believe that you love her? You say you'd die for her! But will you live for her? Would you be willing to change your life for her? What if she told you that she wants you never to go to lockdown again? Would you promise? And would you keep that promise? Even if it meant you had to give up doing some of those stupid things that you like to do? Would you? Could you? Then prove it! It's time to do it!**

## I Miss You

I miss you so much,  
So much I get so weak,  
So much I get no sleep,  
So much I can barely have the appetite to eat,  
So much that I'm dying to feel your heat,  
I miss you so much at night even though you're in my mind,  
Your face is away in light,  
I miss you so much because you're so true and I know you love me and miss me too,  
'Cause I can feel it and I even told me you do,  
If you want my love you better act a fool,  
Because deep down in your heart, you know who loves you,  
Ese guero deeply and truly I love you.

-Guero

**From The Beat: It's really hard to miss someone. We experience loss, and we lose part of ourselves. Who is this person? Do you think things will ever work out between the two of you? You should share this piece with that special someone.**

**you know who  
loves you**

## LIFE

when i read the beat within  
i really read other homies' lives  
i read their pain and their hurts  
all i think about is my future  
i want to get out and start  
all over from scratch with my family  
and start a family of my own  
i guess i am going to camp sweeney  
so love to all the homies  
reach for the stars — i'm out

-Lil' Ally-bo

**From The Beat: Unless you already have a child on the way, and you know that you, the baby's mother, and both families, are okay with providing a caring home in which that child can grow — don't rush to start a family of your own. As for starting from scratch, that's the best way to get the blessings of love and self-respect back. Don't compromise your life — start to do right.**

## My Dream Man

my dream man  
is someone who can stay  
real forever  
who ain't scared to express  
his feelings  
and never turn on me  
i want someone who would  
never cheat on me  
especially with someone  
less than me  
i dream of someone  
who can relate to me  
someone who can accept me  
for who i am  
a man who will always understand  
and be  
true to me  
hey dream man  
where you at

-Lil' Mama Hanna

**From The Beat: This poem may get some play from readers of The Beat, but whatever a player will say, he doesn't mean! Get to know a man as a friend, and you may see who he really is then.**

**The  
system  
can help  
you out in  
a way**

## Can't Do No More Wrong

I want to go home 'cause I don't like this place. Every time we eat we don't say enough "grace."

But, I call my mommy and told her what happen. Then she just told me to be strong, she just said, that when I come home, I can't do no more wrong.

-Anonymous

**From The Beat: When you are in the Hall you don't get to live the lifestyle you're used to. Your experience in the Hall is supposed to prevent you from coming back. Did you learn anything from this place?**

## HAYWARD

Where I'm from, in Hayward, there is a lot of fake people, and there is some crazy homies, too.

But I try to stay away from all that stuff I used to do back in the day. What's important is your family!

My favorite animal is a hog, because they are vicious and have a smart mind. And where I'm from, you have to watch your back — because the scariest person could get you.

-Lil' Ally-bo

**From The Beat: It's hard to see that the scariest enemy you'll ever face is you, 'cause if you go back to what you used to do — you're through. It leads only to jails, hospitals and death. So forget about viciousness and work on your intelligence!**

## BEING RESTRICTED

Last weekend I got restricted [to Camp], all because I missed my curfew call!

And I am also going to be restricted again next weekend because I got a dirty drug test — and I didn't even smoke! So, that's why I'm writing about being restricted, because it is a messed-up thing!

Hopefully though, they will let me go home this weekend anyway. Maybe they will let me sign a contract, and then let me go.

-Mark

**From The Beat: The only thing worse than being clean but getting restricted for a dirty test, is being dirty and getting away with it. Why? 'Cause you know where you've been, and you don't want to go there again! 'One is too many, and a thousand never enough.' Contract or not, keep that in mind — it's all you've got standing between you and repeating an unhappy time.**

## Not Fair

The system is not fair,  
The system makes ninjas scared.  
The system is nothing but a set-up,  
Every time a brotha mess up.  
The system is sometimes fair,  
Only if you ain't never been there.  
If you been in the system three or more times,  
They'll sometime wash you wit' a six to nine.  
The system can help you out in a way,  
Only if you can pimp the system, and lead your life straight.  
So all I can say is,  
Don't get caught up,  
Because the system is waiting for a brotha to mess up.

-Nate

**From The Beat: Nate, what do you mean by "pimp the system"? Why do you think the system is the way it is? Is it possible that it can help anyone in any way? If the system is "waiting for a brotha to mess up", is there a system that can help BEFORE a brotha messes up? How would you design it?**

## TO OLD FOR ME

Chorus:  
To old for me, back then you was. But now reality is showing that a young G is old enough. (Repeat two times)

Verse 1:  
If age is not an issue, I no longer have to dream of you. Been waiting for this moment for so long, but now the tables turn. Girl I am much older. If age is not an issue, I wanna get closer, wanna get closer, to you.

Chorus:  
To old for me, back then you was. But now reality is showing that a young G is old enough. (Repeat two times)

Verse 2:

-Rapper

**From The Beat: I use to dream about you day and night. Now reality is on my side. So what ya say? So what if not another, can I be ya one and only lover. Too old for me baby, then you was, but now this young G's old enough.**



## All Because I Am Gay

They be treating me like I am stupid.  
I am locked up, why the fudge would I be looking for cupid!  
Staff be watchin' me in the showers.

Shhh, they even be ready to give me an hour.

It all started with some lies.

But little did they know that shhh hurt deep inside!

I am already locked up.

But you think they give a fudge?

They trying to make my life a living hell.

During my time in the cell.

And they wonder why, I be having a attitude from time to time.

Man, I would always be happy if people would just stop lying.

Be putting me on special programs all because I rather be called Sir, than Ma'am.

But it's cool 'cause young Dooby don't stay mad for too long.

Eventually I will decide to get even but then they will think I'm wrong.

**-Young Dooby**

**From The Beat: How do you plan to get even? It hurts when people treat you different or judge you. But, what do you think is the best way to get even? Don't sink down to their level and act their way. That is no good. You are no better, than that. If you let their comments and actions affect you then, then they win. If you can see that you are beautiful and smart and confident, then you will see that these people are the ones with the problems, not you.**

## RAP

Back in my adolescent days when I was growing up all I could do was think about you, giving it up every time you passed, but I was too young. But now at last, finally, girl it's time for us. Girl friend let's just hop in the Benz, take a spin, check out a room at the Holiday Inn. So then we can get closer, friends perhaps. It don't stop, it keeps on and on. And baby if not, then I guess I'll catch you on the rebound. I am old enough.

**-Anthony**

**From The Beat: You sound like you really care about this girl. If age is the only thing keeping you apart, then that is something that can be overlooked. What is it about this female that keeps you dreaming? You should share this piece with her.**

## SORRY MOMMA

Sorry momma for not showing you respect.  
Sorry for the things that made you feel like shhh.

But like God said, things happen for a reason.

I am sorry for running away.

I am sorry for not being there

when you had to go to you operation for your cancer.

Sorry that I can't make you happy.

Sorry for you don't have any peace or what you want.

So I will try to love you more and more every day.

So for right now I have to go.

Peace Momma.

Love ya.

**-Dream & Boo**

**From The Beat: Feeling regret, does not feel good. But, we also do feel, like things happen for a reason. So, you should take these feelings as learning experiences. It seems like you are on your way to fixing your relationship with your mom. We wish you the best.**

**They trying to make my life a  
living hell.**

**During my time in the cell.**

**And they wonder why, I be having  
a attitude from time to time.**

## If I Could Walk Out Free Today?

Would I go back to the streets?

Or would I go listen to my granny?

But knowing me I'd probably go look for that ninja who  
snatched on me!

What would I do when I see him?

That is up to me...

**-Lil' Shawn**

**From The Beat: It's a sad thing to see a young man blame his incarceration on a "snitch" and not take responsibility for his actions or for a past that may have finally caught up with him. We know it's the street code but is that more important than your freedom and your grandmother? When will you learn, when you got a 25-L?**

## I Feel...

I feel sad,

I feel mad,

I feel anxious to get out,

I feel horrible,

I feel betrayed,

I feel abused by the system,

I feel I need to change,

I feel lucky,

I feel disappointed,

I feel I'm ready to get out and make

better decisions.

**-Abbas**

**From The Beat: We feel happy for you and your realizations.**

## I Feel...

I feel being in jail is a mental test day by day

I feel anger boiling over

I feel trapped in a different world

I feel that the world I know has stopped

I feel that I must stay control of my emotions

I feel I must not mess up in here

I feel there is a need from my family for me to get out

I feel that I got to get out.

**-James**

**From The Beat: Your family definitely needs you there. We hope you take the necessary steps to work on your anger. Expressing your anger the negative way is as bad a habit and addiction as drugs. It's difficult to just kick the habit without some support.**

Don't laugh



THIS IS ART!

## Where They'll Send Me

I'm writing about where I might go. I might go to ROP (Rites of Passage) in Nevada. I hope that I don't, because I might not stay there — 'cause that's too far from home.

And I might go to a placement out in Fremont. I know if I go to the one in Fremont, I will finish that program for sure. Because I know the person who runs the group home. But the reason I have not left here to go there, is because he does not have a license yet. So that's one reason why I am still here.

But the person who runs the program in Fremont, told my mom that hopefully I will leave the Hall this month to go there. So, I'm just waiting and hoping. This homeboy is out till next time. Stay up!

**-Abo**

**From The Beat: It is always a day to day process when you're doing an outside program, no matter how near or far, no matter what does or doesn't happen. Only one thing is for sure, it will not be clear sailing all the time. Success will depend on you — how well you handle all those thoughts and feelings in you.**

## HOW I FEEL ABOUT HATERS

I'm in this unit living a life that to live is when staff tell me when I can shhh an' have my meal. And we got ninjas in here who be running their mouth, but on the outs we already know that them ninjas are j-cat' and I ain't really tripping ...So for all you haters out there you need to step it an' park it.

**-Leroy**

**From The Beat: You may be tripping because you dedicated all your writing to the haters in there. Just do your program. Focus on you. Stay away from haters or ignore them. A real man who has intelligence can walk away from any talk.**

## Straight Up!

I'm going to tell you straight up, the system does not owe me nothing.

When you get out it's up to me not to come back.

I thank the system.

The time in here got my mind straight.

I'm motivated to do what I was planning to do.

I've finally decided to dedicate myself fully to the lifestyle I should have been focused on from the start.

**-James**

**From The Beat: You are out of juvenile now and onto your next phase. We hope you can stay true to your words. Many people have said these things. What makes the person who wants to change their lifestyle more successful than others?**

## Yelling For My Life Back

I feel like my life is fading away because the system is trying to take my life away. Now I'm stuck in the halls banging on the walls, yelling for my life back and I'm only 15 and my life is on the line.

**-Lil' Augie**

**From The Beat: Only a couple of sentences but full of emotion and urgency. Keep faith and take what is happening to heart. How can you have the same urgency to stay free when you are on the outs? One day at a time.**

**I feel that the world I  
know has stopped**



## THE SYSTEM

The system is heavy topic to talk about  
it makes me want to scream and shout  
It has its highs and lows  
and makes you wonder if it's your friend or foe  
The system will make you or break you —  
it's really on you.

-Ashley

**From The Beat: We're curious about what the system offers in the way of highs. How can the system be your friend? We do feel your last line — it is all on you to determine how the system's going to affect your life. How are you going to move onwards and upwards when you leave the Hall?**

## My Question

Suckas talk they stuff,  
That's why young sav's be grabbin' clips  
Triple homicide on the front page and news  
Ain't no funny stuff  
Some say, do they crew before they do you.  
At least that's what some do.  
So screw him and screw you too.  
I remember what my patna said:  
"Life is like a dice game, shake 'em and roll."  
So my question is, will my heart stay cold or will  
we grow old?  
When the situation is critical, ain't nothin' you  
can do.  
So when life gets tense, what you gonna do?

-Fo'thirty

**From The Beat: We really are interested in your answer to that last question. What are you gonna do when life gets tense? The answer to that question might help answer your other questions, too. In a crap game, it is purely chance that determines how the dice fall. Do you think the course your life takes is purely a matter of chance, or do you think you have some control over its direction?**

## Strawberries

Strawberries are crazy  
Second love to my baby  
When you eat one, it makes you say "Wow!"  
I haven't seen a strawberry for hella months now  
Take your time to devour  
For the taste is sweet, not sour  
A green leaf and a texture bright red  
I prefer them dipped in chocolate  
If I want a strawberry, I'ma break your pockets  
Mmmm, strawberries, it's gotta be the taste  
I'll eat a carton straight to the face  
Remember, take your time to devour,  
It's not a race

-White Chocolate

**From The Beat: Damn, you've got our mouths watering. We hope that you get to have a taste of your second love sometime soon.**

## A KING NEEDS HIS QUEEN

If I was to get released right now, the first thing that I would do is go get my hair cut, go back home and take a shower, and tell her that I'm going to strike through her house.

As soon as I would get to her house, I would knock on the door. If she answered the door, I would give her a big hug, and tell her that I wouldn't do nothing stupid to get in trouble anymore because I can't be a minute without her by my side.

I'm a king, and a king always needs a queen by his side. Kymberly, I just want to tell you that I miss you with all my heart. I can't wait till the day that we're back together on the outs.

-Giggles

**From The Beat: So, what do you plan to give up when you get out in order to stay with Kymberly? It sounds like you clearly understand you can't have both her and the life that brought you here, so you're going to have to make some specific choices. You'll be tempted to do what you've always done, so we hope you're prepared to say no, to avoid certain places and people, and to change the plot so that you can also change the consequences.**

## A LETTER FROM LOVE

Well, what's up Beat? I been writing in it for a while. Not much to say.

Just got court on May 10. I been here since the beginning of January. I'm facing something bad. My max time? I might do 25 years. I'm hoping I don't, but when I go, I will find out. If I do it, I'm only sixteen.

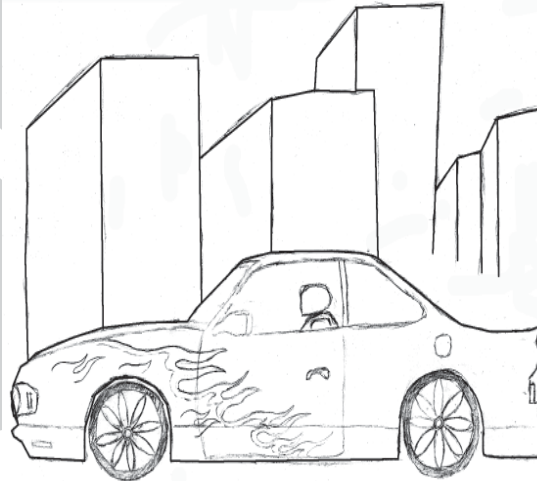
But all I got to say is I will keep in touch with you guys wherever I go. So to all my homies that know me and my homie girls in here — mi familia — I love you guys. I will always miss you you guys, together por vida.

I know a lot of people who call themselves my homies. But they say I'm a snitch. All I like to say is don't judge a book by its cover.

To all my homies and home girls that are locked up, thank you for all the love. Te cuidas (take care). Time will go by fast.

-Spooky

**From The Beat: Unfortunately, it sounds like there's at least a chance that you won't be out to be a familia again. What would you say to your homies and home girls given the circumstances you're facing? Do you think your feelings towards your homies will change if you get 25 years instead of time at the Y? What is it that makes someone your homie? Is it different than what makes him or her familia?**



## My Anger Issues

Not a criminal, just a product of society.  
Where I'm from is a war field where you live violently  
Evil on the streets where thugs pack their heat  
Not to start beef but just to survive on their feet  
Better watch your back when you hit the corner  
Or the next stop will be on the coroner.  
Better watch yourself when you're on the grind  
Or you'll be the next "John Doe" the detectives find.  
Stay in the job like John Gotti  
Have them searchin' the city for your lost body  
Have you missin' and out of sight.  
Forget a celebrity, I'll make you a missing person  
overnight.

-Peanut Head

**From The Beat: Come on, PH, you're not making anyone a missing person overnight. We find mixed messages in this otherwise tight little poem. On the one hand, you warn of the deadly consequences of the street life, but on the other, you threaten to bring about the very violence you warn against. How do you reconcile these two opposing opinions?**

**If I was free right now I  
would go to school  
and learn something  
and after that go home  
and chill.**

## THE POWER OF THE PEN

The power of the pen is uncontrollable  
All the feelings, emotions it must endure  
Clutched in your palm feeling secure  
The power of the pen is uncontrollable

-Ashley

**From The Beat: Can the pen's power be used for bad as well as good? How do you use the power of the pen?**

## Locked Up

Being locked up is hell  
people telling you when to wake up  
eat and to go back to sleep  
when you have to ask staff to take a sit down  
or just take a stand up  
or you have no choice but to go to school  
because you don't want to be  
in that six by four  
that you have to take showers with other  
people —  
it makes me think I want to be free.  
If I was free right now I would go to school  
and learn something  
and after that go home and chill.  
I want to be free  
that's where I want to be  
being free is the way to be.

-Anon

**From The Beat: Do you think being locked up in the hell you describe is helping you appreciate your freedom? Is it helping you prepare for the outs by making you hate the ins so much that you'll do what you need to do to stay out? Did it take being locked up for you to appreciate the little freedoms — going to the bathroom when you want, showering by yourself — and responsibilities like school?**

## Heaven And Hell

For God:

Why do I sometimes lose faith in you? Is it because I think you don't help me, or is it because you don't give me what I want? What is it?

For the Devil:

Why do you bring me down? Why do you hate me? Is it because of my nationality? My skin color? Why do you take the things that are so close to me?

Why do you kill my family so young? Why? RIP Chente, and rest in peace Irma.

-Dreaming

**From The Beat: Unfortunately, we're not religious scholars, so we can't drop divinely inspired answers to your questions. We suspect, however, that the answers to your questions are within you. Why do you think you lose faith in God? How are you convinced that it is the devil that is trying to bring you down, or the devil that has killed your family?**

## MY FIRST TIME

It's my first time being locked up. I hate it.

I miss my house, my family, and my boyfriend. I just want to go home and get back on track. I'd rather be in rehab and on house arrest than be in here.

I'm not used to being told when I can go to the bathroom, when I can eat, and when I can shower.

-Kelly

**From The Beat: Why do you think you're being held in the Hall instead of in a rehab program, where you can get the help that you think you need? How is it that you can get start getting back on track while in the Hall, so that when you do go to another program or back to the outs, you'll be ready to go?**





## Truth Comes Out

Sometimes I think that it's all right to be in here so I could think about what things happened in the past. It gives me the time to remember things.

Sometimes, you could get charged for something you did. But sometimes the ones that put charges on you, they lied. But the things I know, they would come up, and the truth always comes out.

Many of you girls and guys that happened to read this, just remember that the truth always comes up, and God is always going to help you.

I miss my family and where I live, my friends and people that care for me. I miss New Mexico. I'm from there and I wish I could go back.

Everybody take care and stay out of trouble.

-Abel

**From The Beat: Are you willing to say the things you know, or are you confident that they'll come out anyway? How do you maintain your faith in the truth if you think you're facing a situation that's built on lies? As you think about the things that have happened in the past, what is it that you're remembering? How will thinking about the past affect the way you act in the future?**

## Life

Waiting for something  
That never comes  
The story of my life

-Ashley

**From The Beat: What is it that you're waiting for?**

## Forget About The System

The system doesn't owe me anything because I've had everything I've ever needed. I was the one that messed it all up for myself. So the system doesn't owe me shhh.

I'm gonna do two more weeks, 339 hours more and I'm out and off probation. So when I get out, I'm out — ride my motorcycle Honda CBR 1000 RR, back on private insurance, back in my three- story house. Head back to Terranova High and forget about this place.

-Frost

**From The Beat: Do you think the system owes anyone anything? What? What should our society do to help turn children into healthy, functioning, employed and educated adults? Whatever, we're happy that you're planning to head back to high school and put this experience behind you. Make this a one-time-only affair.**

## System Is Bull

The system owes me hella shhh. The system don't care about us, because all they see in us is just young criminals who deserve time in jail, and don't know what's goin' on.

I was raised in the 'hood, and all I see is messed up streets and drugs all over the place. I did drugs and bad stuff because that's all I knew.

I feel that the system should change. The system is building too much jails instead of schools. I'm from East Palo Alto, and I see a lot of things change like more stores and all, but the only things that don't change are the people. There's still killing going on and drug dealing.

-Young Rogue

**From The Beat: We wish you had expanded on your first sentence. You say the system owes you a lot, but you never get specific. At what age did the system start owing you something? What did they owe you then? What do they owe you now? If the system had done what you think it should have done, would that have changed the direction your life has taken?**

## Off Probation Soon

When I got locked up I was at Alameda County. They didn't know me, so they tried to do me. I knew what they were doing, but I wasn't falling for it.

I called my girl. When I spoke to her, they said she sounded more like my girlfriend, instead of my aunt who I said I was gonna call. The staff said my PO was going to get this, but I didn't care 'cause I'm from San Mateo County.

Three days later, I got to make a phone call and called my mom. So I got to speak to both. I told them the truth. I'm only doing 30 and off probation, so I was like, whatever.

-Frost

**From The Beat: What are you going to do when you get off probation? Do you plan to make any changes in the way you live your life? What do you think you will be doing differently in order to avoid the same consequences that you are now living?**

## Cinco De Mayo

I wish I was out today, 'cause it's Cinco de Mayo, and on this day I would be with my friends, but this time I am in the Hall for nothing. I feel bad for not being with the people that need me.

Cinco de Mayo is when me and my homegirls and the homeboys chill all day. Chilling with my friends on Cinco de Mayo is the shhh. We go to Mexican restaurants, but I am in here I can't enjoy it at all.

-Shorty

**From The Beat: What can you do so that you won't be in this situation next year? How can you make the best of everything?**

## TODAY IS A BAD DAY

Today I am having a bad day, because I got locked up again. I was out for eleven days. They locked me up, because I went to an AA meeting and they told me that I was not allowed to, because it's a violation of home detention. But who cares? Because I get out in two days or less.

-Slop E

**From The Beat: Can you go to an AA meeting if you call your PO first and get permission? Can you talk to your PO before you get out again, and set up a system so you can go to AA meetings when you feel you need them? It sounds like you're really trying to do things the right way. Great luck on the outs, where we hope we'll see you next!**

## The Whole Victim Game

I try not to get caught up in the whole victim game that the system owes me or it did me dirty. It is hard sometimes, though. I realize that my actions get me where I am. I own up to what I do.

-Philly

**From The Beat: It's wonderful that you take sole responsibility for whatever you do, Philly, but you don't explain what's up with you that you keep getting caught up! What do you enjoy doing that's legal?**

## The System Owes Me My Life

The system owes me phone calls, money, ambition and my life or youth.

-Gata

**From The Beat: Can you explain how the system has taken your phone calls, money, ambition, life or youth? How can anyone take your ambition? What is your ambition? How do you want to live your youth? What do you want for your life?**

## I Should Be Chillin'

Today is Cinco De Mayo! I should be out chillin' on the streets with my boys! Tonight there are so many parties going on, I should be out.

-Guera

**From The Beat: What can you do to gain your freedom? When you do, can you be more responsible with it?**

## Nobody To Call

The first time I got locked up, I didn't call anyone and now every time I do get locked up, I don't call anyone. Honestly, I don't have anyone to call.

-Philly

**From The Beat: What you wrote is so sad. Where is your family? Friends? Who do you stay with on the outs? Why do you keep coming back to Juvy?**

## MOTHERS

All I want is to go home.  
But instead, I am in here  
for smoking pot and drinking  
some beer.

I am doing two months for doing something everyone does.  
I just wanted to catch a lil' buzz.  
I hate to see my mom cry like that.  
It feels like my heart was crushed  
by a baseball bat.  
I know she loves me and cares a lot.  
But I don't want her to hear that  
her daughter smokes pot.  
I want her to hear that her  
daughter loves her a lot.  
I don't think she hears that

enough from me.

So I am going to tell her every day  
this week.

I love you mother.

I love you like no other.

I'll be home in a few weeks.

So wipe away those tears that fall  
down your cheeks.

-Kay Marie

**From The Beat: That's cool you're going to tell your mom that you love her more often. It might seem like it's no thing, but the smoking and drinking is getting you locked up, so how you gonna stop? Are you gonna risk getting caught again, or are you going to commit to change?**

## To Do Good

On Monday I have court. Hopefully I will get out and get back on track. I haven't been here in three months. I finally have a good job and I'm going to school. I hope if I get out I will keep doing good.

-Ben

**From The Beat: It sounds like you were doing good on the outs, so what changes do you still need to make so that this will be the last time you say goodbye to Juvenile Hall?**

## San Luis Obispo

## DON'T KILL

I don't think they should kill in the state. To kill a human for his punishment is wrong because you can still teach a person how to be nice and killing isn't going to do anything.

-Will

**From The Beat: Some people think that killers can't be taught to not kill. Do you agree?**

## My Song

Rollin' down the street on my big wheel, sippin' on apple juice, laid back with my mind on my mommy and mommy on my mind.

-Josh

**From The Beat: Funny. What else you got on yo' mind?**



## My Broken Heart

I loved a girl once she was the only one she was my pride and joy and she was gonna have my son I still have love for her but she's probably with some other guy but it's always in my mind why she has to lie She took off out the door and I didn't even know it my heart was scarred for life but I didn't even show it. I thought she loved me for the fact that I'm a nice kind of person but she stabbed me in the back When she came back she gave me this bogus story that her friends drugged her up and she told me not to worry. It had a big impact on my life, I cannot deny I would take a bullet for this girl and for her I would die I was in my room for a week and all that stuff If I saw her on the outs I wouldn't say what's up because she's broken my heart way, way too much.

-Thomas

**From The Beat: You are definitely not alone. Relationships are hard and complex. In retrospect, what are some areas that could have been better in this relationship and how can you prevent these weaknesses in your future? How can you try to not put all of yourself on the line for love but have a healthy co-committed relationship instead of a co-dependent one? We could tell from your conclusion that you made a good decision and we'd like to encourage you to get yourself right before getting too involved.**

## My Boyfriend's House

When I hear the word home I think about my boyfriend's house. It's not just a home to me it's a place where I feel loved and everyone cares about me. Right now I do kinda consider juvenile hall as my home cause I've been staying here a while and I'll be here a while longer.

But my only real home is with my man and his family. There isn't really anything to fear at home except when I flip out. To me the word home means a place that I feel comfortable and I feel like everyone cares about me It's not just a place I keep my things and sleep when I'm tired.

-Shannon

**From The Beat: Your outlook on this topic is extremely interesting, and we like it. Often times children hear the word home and automatically think about where their parents stay. But just because society trains us to believe this is the right answer doesn't necessarily mean it is. What would you say to the person that says 'home should be with your family'? What would you say in a conversation with a child like this? We appreciate your insight. Thank you.**

## We've Lasted

Well, my first love was when I was thirteen. I had dated several times before, but none worked out. But on that day at a bus stop on this street, across from this place, there he was.

He came to the bus stop and sat next to me. He started to talk. He was very polite. Unlike most, he wasn't perverted or anything. We talked, and as his bus came up, we traded numbers. Then like two week later he called me and asked how I was doing. Then we started to talk and we ended hookin' up with each other at my group home even though he would have to take the bus.

Then one day his PO told him that he's going to have to turn himself in. So the last day he was out he came to see me. We spent the whole day together and he gave me all his jewelry to wear and hold on to 'till he got out of Juvy. He would write me and I would write him. He was locked up for eleven months and I held it down for him.

Then, when he got out of the Hall we were still together and still to this day we are. He asked me to marry him and so he gave me a ring — half-karat gold — and I wear it all the time when I'm not in this hell place. We have each other's name on us; I have his name on my back. We have been together for almost four years this June.

-Traviesa

**From The Beat: We are so happy for you. It sounds like you respect and appreciate what you have with your boyfriend. Have you ever heard the saying 'We don't know the treasure we hold is precious until we've flung it away.'? You've been able to appreciate what's precious without flinging it away, and that takes a whole lot of character. What made you love this person? Is it still the same as it was four years ago? Is it better or worse? Explain with more of your elegant words.**

## Peace In Your Life

The people that bring peace to my life would be my family. My dad, because he just was killed in a car accident and I love him so much and he was everything to me.

My mom, because she survived the accident and she has been there for me through anything. I love my mom and dad even though my dad's gone. He still brings peace to my life. My mom will always be there for me no matter what and that brings peace to my life.

-Vanchanco

**From The Beat: We are always filled with joy when people give shot-outs to their families. However, we also know that families aren't usually as appreciated before people are incarcerated. Why do you think this is? And did you fall under this category when you were out?**

## Hectic Home

Home to me used to not be the place I wanted to be. Home was the last place I would turn to when I needed a place to sleep. Now what used to be the place I didn't want to be, now is the place I'd rather be more than any place in the world. I came to this conclusion only on my second week in SEF Arizona. It's that bad. It's a place you don't want to be. Home used to be hectic, mom and dad fighting, my older brother and I going at it on the kitchen floor. I hated it and I wanted to escape. I always got pissed off when my mom said ten or twelve p.m. curfew, you can't hang out with that guy or this girl.

But now I realize she was looking out for me. Making sure I wouldn't end up the place I am today. And here I am; wishing for what could have been. I'm away coming here improved my household. My mom and dad take parenting classes and my mom and I have counseling. My older brother changed his ways and some bad habits. It made them realize that life at home has something to do with me being here. So now I think that truly, when I do get out of here I can honestly say "I'm going to my home sweet home."

-Kimberly

**From The Beat: What would make this time around different than the last time? How can you make sure that you are ready to view home as a place you want to be? Has being away from it been enough to sustain your desire to be there? Or will you slip back to your old views about home? Only you and time can tell...**

## A NEW JERSEY LOVE

I'm going to write about my first love. I met my first love back in New Jersey. Her name was Kandus and we met when we were about eight years old. We were best friends until we were twelve — that's when I asked her out. I loved her very much and I knew that she loved me I thought about her everyday I was so happy that nothing else mattered at all.

She was so special because she was practically my only friend at school. I wasn't really liked by anybody at school so she was my best friend and was there for me when nobody else was and she helped me out with a lot of my problems.

When she broke up with me we were fourteen years old. I felt like someone in my family had died. After that we stopped talking and found new friends. We haven't talked a lot since then. I still love her in some way and I sometimes think about her but not in that way. I still miss and wonder how she is doing and if I should talk to her when I go back, but these are just thoughts.

-Paul

**From The Beat: There's a commonly used cliché that goes perfect with your situation, and that's 'follow your heart'. We know it may sound like a corny quote, but if you understand it's meaning, it actually is very good advice. For it's encouraging you to go with your first instinct. If your instinct (or your heart) is saying you shouldn't get in contact with her, then that's probably what you should do. But if it tells you otherwise, then maybe you should contact her. How do you feel about following your heart? Do you think it'll be best in the long run if you followed your heart?**

## GOT TO SHARE

"Home," most of my life spent there, having brothers and sisters means I got to share. Knowing everybody cares for me, while away from home is hard for me to deal with because people are against me keeping me locked away from my family.

Everyday I feel bad hoping that God will forgive me for my sins. One day I'll go home and my new life will begin and just then I will know that my home will be there for me. But the only question is home is where I feel safe, home is where I have space and where I belong, my mother and my father will be there for me at home.

-Chris

**From The Beat: We envy the fact that through the struggle of incarceration you've stayed hopeful. Does knowing that home is a wonderful place motivate you to want to get out? How? Have you shared this with your family? If so, what was their response? If not, we encourage you to give this to them because we feel it's a very powerful piece.**

## Quit Your Game

My life at home is peaceful, but if you want to call home a place where you rest your head at night, then the place I call home is a place that I can rest my head at night.

But anyways, about to close this up. Just chillin' in my cell with my roommate as we writin', but hey, why go out there and do stuff that's going to put you in jail? If you are, you should just quit while you are ahead because you will get caught up in your game and you will end up in the hall. So just quit your game and just keep it tight and keep it real later.

-Clifford

**From The Beat: You had some insightful messages in your piece. Do you take your own advice? Did you quit while you were ahead? Why or why not? And what does being ahead even mean? How does one know whether they're ahead or not? Maybe the real statement should not be quit, but don't get started in the first place. What do you think?**

**If I saw her on the outs I wouldn't say wassup because she's broken my heart way, way too much.**



## Lo Que El Sistema Me Debe

Lo que el sistema me debe es mi libertad porque me tiene aquí injustamente por algo que yo no estaba haciendo. Cuando los pinches placas me arrestaron, ellos pensaron que yo estaba apunto de hacer algo malo. Por eso es que digo que el sistema es injusto y me debe mi libertad.

**From The Beat: Que lástima que hayas caído injustamente. Amigo, no queremos que tomes esto a mal, pero creemos que esto te pasó por andar con gente que no debiste haber andado. Para próxima cuida de las malas compañía y de los lugares malos.**

## What The System Owes Me

What the system owes me is my freedom because it has me unjustly in here for something that I wasn't even doing. When the punk police arrested me, they thought that I was on the brink of doing something bad. That's why I say that the system is unjust and that it owes me my freedom.

-Shadow 150 Crew

## Lo Que Siento

Lo que siento es pena porque no voy a poder ayudar a mi familia porque estoy preso. Lo que me hace cambiar son mis padres que estan en México.

**From The Beat: Que pena de verdad amigo. Pero sabes, todavía tienes tiempo, quient e dijo que todo saldrá mal, que no podrás ayudar a tu familia.**

## What I feel

What I feel is pain because I'm not going to be able to help my family due to my incarceration. What make me change are my parents who are in Mexico.

-Luis San Mateo

## COMO ME SIENTO

Hola me llamo Miguel y les voy a contar como estoy y como me siento aquí en este lugar. Bueno, por ahora estoy bien, no tengo problemas con nadie. Aquí todos son mis amigos por ahorita. Pero la verdad es que me siento un poco triste porque hoy es 6 de mayo y es el día de mi cumpleaños y me encuentro aquí encerrado. También creó que estoy triste porque en una semana me van a mandar para México. Yo estaba ilusionado en salir de aquí y no que me deportaran, pero no me quisieron dar una oportunidad. Bueno, esto es todo como estoy y como me siento.

**From The Beat: Que pena que te encuentres mal porque perdistes la oportunidad de pasar bien ese cumpleaños. Los cumpleaños es algo muy especial, deberías de buscar la manera en como no meterte en problemas amigo. Recuerda que la vida que estas viviendo es la tuya no la de otra gente. También lo sentimos que todos tus planes se hayan caído abajo, pero no te preocupes que Dios sabe porque hace las cosas.**

## HOW I FEEL IN THIS PLACE

Hello, my name is Miguel and I'm going to tell y'all how I am doing and how I am feeling inside of this place. As for right now, I'm doing fine. I don't have any problems with anyone.

In here, everyone is my friend for right now, but the truth is that I feel a bit sad because today is May 6th and it's my birthday and I find myself in here, locked-up.

I also believe that I am sad because in a week I'm getting deported to Mexico. I was visualizing myself getting out of here and not getting deported, but they didn't want to give me an opportunity.

Well, that's how I am and that's how I feel.

-Miguel, Santa Cruz

## La Llamada De Teléfono

Cuand caí preso la primera persona que yo llamé fue a mi jefita. La llamé para que ella supiera donde me encontraba y pudiera hacer algo por mí y poder salir de esta pinche cárcel, juvenil hall.

**From The Beat: ¿Sólo la llamastes para que tratara de sacarte de ahí? ¿Se te hizo facil haberla llamado? ¿Como lo tomó ella? Faltastes mucha información que no sabemos.**

## The Phone Call

When I got locked-up, the first person that I called was my mother. I called her to let her know about my whereabouts and ask her if she could do something for me to help me get out of this punk jail, Juvenile Hall.

-Shadow 150 Crew

## THE SYSTEM ES INJUSTO CONMIGO

El sistema ha sido racista conmigo. Esta vez me dieron probación y he estado un mes en la juvenil, y después me van a deportar a México por un delito menor. Llebo un mes esperando que me deporten a México y no tengo familia allá. Que puede hacer un muchacho en México de 17 años allá. Pienso que está mal porque la señora que dijo que estaba yo de mojado es racista y no quiere a la gente de color.

**From The Beat: Que mala situación te encuentras amigo, bueno desafortunadamente no se puede hacer nada, cuando ellos dicen que haran algo, lo haran. Sólo esperamos que lo tuyo sea rápido y que muy pronto estes con tu gente allá. Recuerda en no meterte en problemas allá porque es más difícil.**

## THE SYSTEM IS UNFAIR WITH ME

The system has been racist with me. This time they gave me probation and I have already been in Juvenile for a month.

Then, whenever I get off probation, I'm going to get deported because of a minor offense. I've been waiting for a month for them to deport me to Mexico.

The cold part is I don't even have family done there. What can a seventeen year old young man do in Mexico.

I think it's messed-up because a lady in here called me a "wetback". She's a racist and doesn't like people of color.

-Jacob, Marin

## La Primera Persona Que Llamé

Cuando caí preso a las primera personas que llamé fue a mis primos que los quiero como hermanos, ya que son los únicos parientes que tengo aquí para decirles que estaba preso. Ellos me dieron ánimos para seguir adelante y me dijeron que no me aguitara, que la vida sigue y que avece la vida era injusta. O sea que sólo me queda enfrentar la situación y echarle ganas.

Cuando estoy en mi tiempo de recreo, llamo a mis primos porque son mis únicos familiares aquí que me han apoyado y han dado ánimos para seguir adelante, que me han demostrado que la vida sigue y que no me aguiste. Aunque me gustaría comunicarme con mi familia que se encuentra lejos pero no puedo.

**From The Beat: Esta bien que te dieron ánimos para salir adelante, esperamos que siempre te sigan apoyando con todo esto y que algún día también puedas ayudar a alguien de la misma manera como te han ayudado. No te aguitas y sigue adelante porque la vida sigue con muchas sorpresas.**

## The First Person I Called

When I got arrested, the first people that I called where my cousins whom I love like brothers since they are the only family members that I have in this country with whom I could disclose my situation. They encouraged me to keep my head up and they told me not to get sad because life continues and sometimes life is unfair. Also, they told me that the only thing that I have left to do is to confront the situation and make the best of my situation.

When I am on my recreation time, I call my cousins because they are the only family members I have in America that have supported me and whom have encouraged me to continue moving forward, who have shown me that life goes on, and who have told me to not get sad. Even though I would like to be able to communicate with my family that's far away, that's impossible because of where I find myself right now.

-Chiqui B5, SF/YGC

## Lo Que Siento Adentro De Mí

Lo que siento adentro de mí es calor

Aveces no siento el viento

Y aveces siento frío y no siento

El calor de tu amor.

Lo que siento por ti es hermosura

Que cualquier criatura

Gusiera ser tú.

Cuando te miro siento bonito

y te miro como si fuera un lindo monito.

Cuando me tocas siento enloqueserme

¿Porque no puedo estar contigo?

Me miro y siento que estoy ciega

Y cuando me abrazas me siento seguro que nada

Ni nadie podrá venserme.

Te quiero y te extraño,

Mi querida jefecita.

**From The Beat: Que lindo poema, esta super, esperamos que lo puedas mandar a tu madre, pero te sugerimos que mejor lo hagas en persona y verás la felicidad que le traerá a su vida. Búscala y quierala, y procura en siempre estar ahí a su lado.**

## What I feel Inside Me

What I feel inside me is warmth

Sometimes I can't feel the wind

And sometimes I feel the cold and I can't

Feel the warmth of your love.

What I feel for you is beautiful

Who any creature

Wish it were you.

When I see you I feel something good

And I see you as if you were a little money,

Why can't I be with you?

I look at you and I feel I'm blind

And when you hug me,

I feel secure that nothing or anything will

Defeat me.

I miss you and I love you,

My dear mother.

-Mona San Mateo

## ALGO HORROROSO

Si pudiera escribir un discurso acerca de las cosas más horrosas que me ha pasado en mi vida escribiría sobre cuando me cuetiaron y senti la muerte muy cerca. Esto para mí fue muy horroroso porque sientes la muerte muy cerca.

**From The Beat: ¿Pero que aprendistes? ¿Seguistes con lo mismo? ¿Te importo, pensastes en lo peor que te pudo haber pasado? Amigo, deberías de cuidar tu vida, porque si no la cuidas nadie lo hará por ti.**

## SOMETHING HORRIBLE

If I could write an essay about the most horrible things that have happened to me in my lifetime, number one would be the time when I got stabbed because when that happened, I felt like death was near. For me, that was something horrible because I felt like death was near.

-Shadow 150 Crew



## Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H

We'll allow the following intro from our dear friend Laura give you the low down about the next onslaught of voices that come out of the very cool and urgent publication/program the Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H out of Providence, Rhode Island. It is an honor that for the least several plus years we have been able to maintain this special relationship. Read on from our east coast friends!

### HELLO

Hello Beat Within writers and readers - this work from "Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H." - a publication of writing and art by incarcerated youth, similar to The Beat Within, from Rhode Island. Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H. is published out of a youth arts organization in Providence, RI called AS220 Broad Street Studio. We love collaborating with The Beat Within; check out our latest issue to see the Cali representation inside. Tell us what you think - we'd love to hear from you. You can send your responses, ideas and questions to: Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H. c/o AS220 Broad Street Studio, 790 Broad Street, Providence RI 02907, 401.467.0701, bspress@as220.org.peace,

**Laura, Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H. Manager**

### Untitled

No two days are alike, I live my life in the future and say forget the past. Everyone has a voice, and it's your choice on how you're going to use it. I act more than I talk most wouldn't understand the violence under the words of my life.

There is more to life than we know we are trained to believe the same thing. The same rumors and gossip that we call history.

My life is a car constantly in high speed, there's a job to the left and a party to the right. My left blinker is on but I take a right. I need to slow down but I can't my brakes don't work, so I role right into a rehabilitation facility.

**- Andrew H.**

### Untitled

Born yesterday duped by society imposing that life is great. To behold the abominable glamour of this horrendous life that I have yet to discover the true meaning of. I think that I've been tricked into believing that I should believe what's in these books. So I look towards the beauty of a magnificent mind to set me free.

**- Andrew H.**

### Utitled

Hi my name is bill I came to America in a boat. My bodies ship me from place to place and once I get on the streets I get sold to all kinds of people. But once I get sold to the right person they love when I come into effect. I can be really bad it's an ugly site to see. You can put me in a glass tube and just give me a hit & I'll make you feel all right.

**-Brian**

### Duped

I was duped to be living to look of magnificent  
beauty on the inside  
I discover that the truth is the best thing  
Behold them in

**- Littlez**

### Untitled

Understanding the voice of others.  
a-like yours or not  
a life of violence b-cause people have differents  
contrast life

**- Littlez**

### Untitled

The freestyle of a child wild  
as the style forms into rhythm  
Some are hidden and others are forbidden  
When it's not written people are driven  
to be the realest The King of Rap  
was a crack baby even though he scream help me in his rhymes  
So much that he high just to keep it live and fly  
Some times of life is living by the knife precise  
That the night you live is to do right.

**-Matthew S.**

### Untitled

If time was reversed women celebrate their sweet six  
Peep this sweet sixteen wouldn't exist  
Age would be stopped  
Flew back before their street brothers got popped  
Babies in cradles would hold the wisdom of the dead  
Knowledge would swell their soft skulls and fragile heads  
And growing up wouldn't cause such dread  
Lives full of promise and promises kept  
But that's a far cry cause problems with race,  
People hating people because of their face  
to make that day good you just got to stay away  
from the hood.

**-Ray, Jermaine, John C., Tryston, Matt, Laura**

### a haiku

Air Forces or Tims  
Gold chain of platinum or white gold  
Drugs Alcohol Girlz

**- Scott H.**

### a haiku

Destroying their home  
riots violence soldiers  
an war killing kids

**- Scott H.**

### a haiku

People are climbing  
stealing chilling vandalizing  
riots kids bois and girlz

**- Scott H.**

## Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H (cont.)

### UNTITLED

Sometime I sit down in  
my window and think about freedom  
'cause my only wish is to see my people  
My brother, my sister, my mother, my father,  
I'm f-o-c, level one, some times I say why bother  
If you feel my pain like Rhodes does,  
Just holla  
Holler at the top of your lungs – scream  
like our ancestors did when demons lived beyond their worst  
dreams  
In the dark night of primeval skies  
Singing songs that bring peaceful rest  
How we gonna bring happiness  
in a life where the only thing certain is death  
- Ray, Jermaine, John C., Tryston, Matt, Laura

### Untitled

Callousness and envy  
are two heinous sins  
I got lock up it's like me seeing demons  
and it's not me  
this evil person I see  
When I want to start to scream  
I can't hear my own plea  
Damn! I just wanna be free,  
Ya' feel me "B," why me?  
"Why me" say the precious eyes begging for trust  
Up against a wall – release is a must  
And what is is not what it seems  
In the blanket of night in the light of dreams  
-Ray, Jermaine, John C., Tryston, Matt, Laura

### DAMN! I JUST WANNA BE FREE

Close Future  
I'm hiding in a lie  
cannot tell her how I feel  
Drama keeps on punishing me  
from a destiny so real,  
When the sun goes down  
it robs me of my light  
I abhor the duress plaguing me  
I'm in a black-robe with a scythe.  
I'm walking in a sheltered park  
My anger's very tamed  
Now I'll see how those cowards feel  
when they are the game.

-Nikolai

### UNTITLED

I would like to run away from society  
But I have loving family members and priorities  
So when I'm walking across the street wondering if this car will hit  
I see the face of my father who's already suffered the loss of my  
mother  
Can't bear the loss of another  
Change comes from reaching out to sister and brother  
Even to lovers  
Our destinies entwine  
When my father went to heaven  
I didn't had no one 'cause he die in 1997  
And now 7 years passed it seems all too fast  
I wish they all were still here so my life would last  
-Ray, Jermaine, John C., Tryston, Matt, Laura

### Untitled

Unless you know my family,  
Or know my morals:  
You're just an acquaintance.  
If you speak stupidity,  
Or try to degrade my character –  
You don't know me,  
You're just a jailhouse acquaintance.  
If all you do is run your mouth and never dance,  
When you get knocked out don't take it to the heart . . .  
You're just a jailhouse acquaintance.  
So chump, you aren't true!  
Keep your distance, I don't want to hear anything.  
If so, I'll teach you a lesson;  
Because you had to be messin'  
With the wrong person, at the wrong time.

-Martin

**I communicate  
conspiracies that's  
hidden from the  
government**

### Untitled

These demons plaguing my dreams  
Are tearing open the seams  
The government and legislation  
see to run supreme,  
in the conspiracy to keep the youth down  
the presidents the one who wears the crown  
Hidden behind the friendly grin  
is an evil that's eating away from within.  
Now I hope ya'll convicts have some fun  
'Cause I'm bouncin from this place in one.  
-Nikolai

### Untitled

I communicate conspiracies that's hidden from the government  
evil people say I ain't bouncin' I'm bugging at them saying I'm loving it  
These evil government demons got conspiracies of their own  
They wanna communicate and change the world  
but never change their home  
They hide the way they livin' and keepin' their demons hidden  
But for all of these government cats to all I say good ridance  
-TR

## Hidden T.R.E.W.T.H (cont.)

### *My Heart*

My heart is like a light it sparks, my heart would always beep  
cause I really feel that you're in love with me.

My heart for you is berry strong.

When I wait for you a little while the time seems long  
and if my heart tears apart I would spark and listen to a sad song.

-John C.

## Mommy I swear you gotta be from Heaven

### Untitled

Why do the good die so young  
is he in heaven above  
is he that white angel flying

Above

No one know what he  
Tried to accomplish or tried  
to succeed

They only see what  
Their eyes what them to  
Believe

Has anyone ever spent one  
Second in his shoes, or you did  
Then tell my why you Jude Him  
As you do.

Have you even lived a  
life with nothing but shame  
Have you ever lived a life  
where people play no games  
Have you ever lived a life when  
you're Guarenteed death  
Death right around the

Corner

Death right on ya steps  
I bet no one has lived his  
Life, or felt the anger  
he feels

So I ask AGAIN  
why do the good die  
young

RIP Honda

From: The one and only Kay-Kay  
-Kay-Kay

## THE TRUTH ABOUT...

Verse 1:

I got through more than I let people know  
and all I got now is to hide with my flow  
the street was hard on me I wasn't hard on the street  
My grand mother always told me that knowledge is the key  
now I see it don't help me in the r-i-t-s  
'cause school won't let you know you get in trouble for flix  
life these days is all about smiles and crys  
You wanna see a troubled kid look deep in my eyes  
But I always keep a smile what ever the weather  
although I sink like a rock they think I'm light as a feather  
and my grand mother raised me good 'cause I'm always nice  
and I tell the first joke just to break the ice  
I always have a smile even when the heat's on  
at the age of 6 getting jumped I was getting beat on  
that's why I stay strong for so long  
Age of ten like rap I wrote my first song  
It all started near my home in the park after dark  
When I lied to a cop when I thought I was invisible or iron like tony stolk  
I hustled with a cold heart approached life without thinking  
I'm still a trouble maker starting drama with out blinking  
Hopefully for me that light is gonna replenish  
'Cause if I stay on this bad path one day I'm gonna be finished

-TR

### Untitled

I live my life in shame,  
And watch the blood squirt from my veins,  
As the blood starts to flow,  
all I can feel is the pain,  
As I try to get off the floor  
I run for the door,  
But its too late,  
Because I'm wanted at heavens gate.

-Jessica T.

### Promise

I cannot promise you that  
I will change  
I cannot promise you that  
everything's going to be O.K.  
I cannot promise you that  
Thing will always Be there  
But what I can promise  
you is that I will be there.  
I DO promise that I will  
laugh and cry with you  
I DO promise that I will  
never leave your side  
But one thing I DO promise  
That the love will never  
End.

-Nikita F.

## You don't know me

I'm in love wit' one woman, one heart man and none other  
than the most beautiful woman alive -  
my mother

who made sacrifice after sacrifice  
just to make sure we had food, clothes and was actin right  
how I pay back for my life Ma it's impossible  
but know this if anyone hurt you they gotta pop me to  
mommy I promise you until I die that provide for you  
cuzz can't nobody do what you do and have done for us

I never want to hear you speakin bout you not enouf for us  
to see you smiles like movein the clouds to see the sun bright  
you showed us if we want it then we gotta go get it 'cause we get one life

A Black Queen Mamma  
you are through the worst you prevailed and brought  
paradise right to our door

Mommy I swear you gotta be from Heaven  
how else can one explain every Christmas every Birth day every day living  
Every time I would mess up you'd right my wrong  
Because I love you I wrote you this song.

-Resh



**E-MONEY** To say it's an honor to present E-Money's writing in *The Beat Without* is an understatement. Here's a man who has been through it all with us, from LCRS to SF/YGC to the Pen, and he's taken us with him every step of the way. We've been blessed to bear witness to his growth, in spite of the worlds in which he found himself, and he now regularly graces our pages with unparalleled wisdom. Simply put, he is what *The Beat* is all about. In the following piece, E-Money steps to the dangers of the implicit messages we receive through watching TV, and urges all of us to watch — if we watch — with a critical and informed eye. E-Money writes us from New Folsom State Prison, where his mind becomes more free each day.

## The Systematic Brainwashing Of The Mind

I like to refer to television as "the hidden systematic education of the brain that serves as a guide to a fictitious life." I say what I say because far too many of us is mentally victimized by the uninvestigated messages we allow to enter into our minds. One may be asking where it's I'm going with this, and my response would be to sit back, relax, and let me take your minds through a journey of education and relinquish your mind from its state of mis-education. Word of advice: Please be open-minded.

If television has sexual language that exceeds the minds of children such as "I need some dip for my chip," that is translated to adults through body language (refers to gestures, facial expressions, and other body movements that convey meaning) or verbal intonation (refers to the emphasis someone gives to words or phrases that convey meaning), what makes you think it can't be just as tricky with you by giving you a dressed-up believable systematic theory to go with the rest of your systematic theories?

For example: How many of you were persuaded by George Bush's "State of Emergency" Act concerning Saddam Hussein and his suspected weapons of mass destruction by using his background and past as enticing factors to further persuade your minds and suspensions? How many of you actually thoroughly investigated when it came to the "decoding of information process" instead of just taking in transmitted gossip as believable?

If you're not careful of how you decode (undo or retranslate a sender's message) societal information, you'll find yourself a victim to systematic brainwashing and limitation. What I'm saying is one must be careful of that in which one decides to believe.

Putting uninvestigated information within your mind is like putting unclean meat within your mouth. It will eventually affect you in a negative way. Just because 60% of the world's population perceive something as right or wrong doesn't mean it's a 100% right or wrong. One who follows this pattern I tend to perceive as one who depends and trust the world's theories and opinions more than his own theories, opinion, and knowledge. One who accepts this percentage without even at least attempting to come to the aid of his own perceptions and assumptions is systematically brainwashed. In other words, you are a robot and follower. You have allowed the world to form a mind for you.

"Every oral communication has a non-verbal message and the non-verbal message usually carries the greatest impact."

The problem with a lot of us is we're not active listeners (listening for full meaning without making premature judgments or interpretations), instead we are systematically brainwashed and are programmed to put a systematic emphasis on what is right or wrong, good or bad, and normal or abnormal. You are locked behind the bars of limitation and are a slave to cultural boundary. In other words, if it's not American, it's not right or less than — or if it's American, all goes, even the criminally thievery of the next man's country. Therefore, in some ways you are prejudiced, ignorant, and not of yourself, but more of this world. I'm not sorry to say that you are a programmed follower. You are an institutional robot. You are not thinking with your mind, but that of someone else's.

"Judgment without a thorough investigation is the right of ignorance."

In some cases, in order for you to thoroughly understand one, you must understand his/her culture. If you were to thoroughly analyze TV, you'll come to see the affects it can have on premature and vulnerable minds. For example: a kid who watches Jerry Springer every day will eventually perceive such activities as normal, or only partially abnormal, instead of completely abnormal. This kid will eventually process immoral and perverted thoughts. Even though he/she doesn't show it at the time, something that is continually conceived and thought about within the mind will eventually be consciously and unconsciously brought into manifestation. A kid that watches the violent Ninja Turtles will more likely be more aggressive than the kid who watches the non-violent puppet show. The kid who watches a lot of superhero cartoons such as Cops, detectives, and movies that consist of good guys versus bad guys, that kid will more than likely want to grow up to be a cop or detective. The kid who grows up looking at films that depicts the bad guy, the poor guy, or the less fortunate guy as

black, brown, or white, the kid will more likely grow-up to have a stereotyped mind.

If you ever said, "He/she acts black," or "He/she acts white," you are diagnosed with a stereotyped mind. I rather refer to such characteristics as "square-like" or "ghetto-like." Therefore, these characteristics don't point at a race. This is just an example of how TV can affect the minds in all people from all perspectives, if you're not aware of that in which you allow to step into your mind. "What you don't see on TV 'sends' just as loud of a message as what you do."

A lot of times we allow outcome to speak for reason which is the clearest sign of judgment without investigation. If a man on your five o'clock news got arrested for suspectedly killing two men, your first thought is, "Is he guilty and a murderer?" Do keep in mind that you haven't been presented with no evidence and even if you were, how do you know it wasn't plotted? All you know is — it's on the news, so it must be true. In your mind, this man is automatically wrong. You don't ask yourself if he did do it, or what caused him to do it. Maybe those two men was trying to kill him. These questions a lot of times don't flow through your mind. The only thing that matters is he looks like a thug and the media said he did it, so he must have did it. You are a victim to systematic brainwashing.

How a receiver feels when a message is received influences how he/she interprets it. Therefore, if you were emotionally affected from the traumatizing incident that happened on "9/11," (RIP), it was easy to persuade your minds to fight back against terrorism. There's nothing wrong with this, but there is something wrong acting out of ignorance, hatred and inaccuracy. This is what I believe happened with the invasion of Iraq. You allow the media to take your fear, to take your anxiety, and take your emotions and exploit them. Bush just pulled the switch that murdered hundreds of Americans and thousands of civilians, but you gave him the permission.

In summation, I guess a more cautious way to watch TV would be to seek out the stated purpose of each program and also the non-verbal cues and messages (communication and messages transmitted without words), to not allow unclean information to so easily make friends with this concept of what you think is truth without thoroughly investigating. Just like you can become what you eat, you also can become a slave of what you think. You see, your thoughts control your actions and your actions control your destiny. Therefore, it's extremely important to stay on your P's and Q's when it comes to processing information. Manipulation can be your so-called "friend." Manipulation can be your enemy. Manipulation can be your perception or even your hearing. Manipulation can even be you. You see manipulation comes in all shapes, sizes, and forms even that in which you can't see. Like I said before, if you don't develop yourself a mind the world would develop one for you. "Be not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewal of your mind."

I guess what I'm getting at is to be a leader and not a follower. Don't let selective perception (selectively interpreting what you see or hear based on our interest, background, experience, and attitudes) take control over your mind, but instead open-mindedness. Think with love and not hate, happiness and not anger, intelligence and not ignorance. Be a living cure for those who are sick. Most of all, be not condemned by one's own conception, or a worldly conception of what you think is right and wrong, good or bad, just or unjust. May we all grow to be better and unjudgmental people.

## An Excerpt From A Letter

Change always comes across as a discomfort, but it's something that we most definitely got to effectively deal with. Sometimes things happen that's out of our control. The only thing we can do is stay strong and refuse to let events hinder our striving and consistent progress. Evil is always out there lurking to catch one unprepared, but we must be careful to acknowledge it when it comes regardless of what shape or form it arrives, because faith, consistency, strength, and determination is always going to keep us afloat.

You can always count on me to be there to assist. That's what a friend is for. We're there to remind each other what support and love is about. We're there to remind each other how beautiful life can be.

**IAN** Ian has stepped up to represent Ohio in The Beat a number of times in the past year, and we're happy that he's continuing to drop pieces our way. In the following poems Ian covers wide ground, from writing to beauty to his neo-hippie ways. We look forward to hearing more from Ian, who comes to us from Highland Hills, Ohio.

## The Hippie In Me

I read the paper  
I watch the news  
I want to cry  
So much anger  
So much death  
The world is hate  
I want to love  
I want to help  
I want to save  
I want to stop.

Thoughtful Night  
The night is the worst time of the day  
When your thoughts and feelings wander astray.  
When you walk through, your mind is so languid  
and slow  
You think about how very little you know.  
You think about life, and what it has in store  
You think about yourself, right down to the core.  
It's scary at times what you see in your head  
It's scary at times when you think I should be dead.

Missing Family  
I miss my family oh so much  
I haven't seen them in 11 months.  
I write and call, but that isn't enough.  
I need to see and touch my family.  
I won't be home for another four months  
I've been gone since April '03  
I'm going home to see them in  
July '04.

America Fights  
America gets into every  
Scuffle and fight.  
You hear it on the news  
Every single weeknight  
America fights....  
Too much.

## HIPPIE REVOLUTION

I will not surrender  
To the man.  
He can lock me up  
And throw away the key.  
However, he can never  
Imprison me  
For I am free  
Wherever I go  
Because I am  
A reborn hippie.

Stop  
Stop the killing  
Stop the fight  
Stop the murder  
Let the oppressed take flight  
Please come home  
And end the war  
The people are free  
The tyranny is no more

**I don't want  
to be the  
next cliché  
I just want  
to go the  
right way**

**When will life  
Allow me to  
take flight?**

## Music

There are trials and tribulations  
There are joys and jubilations  
For all time there is one thing  
It makes us cry and makes us  
sing  
Music is the beat of life  
Music helps us through the  
worst strife  
It will always be and never go  
It is something we'll always  
know  
Music is a love and a passion  
Music is sound and emotion  
Music is life

Jim Morrison  
He wrote words  
He wrote songs  
He was a hero  
He didn't live long  
He fought the man  
He fought establishment  
He was the heart  
He was the soul  
He was rock and roll.

Art  
What is art?  
Is it song?  
Is it on a wall?  
Is it in a frame?  
Is it on a page?  
It's all art  
All beauty  
All right  
All now.

## Write

Feeling ill  
Not quite right  
Tired all over  
Want the night.  
My body aches  
The day is bright.  
When will life  
Allow me to take flight?  
My motion languid  
Energy slight.  
INSPIRATION  
Write, write, write.

## APPRECIATE IT

So many thoughts  
Running through my head  
I can't put them down  
Before they escape  
They run, dance, and play  
It's hard to write  
When you are free  
When you don't know  
What you've got  
Until it's gone  
You only appreciate  
What you can't have.

## Life

What is it that makes us tick?  
Our heart, our wind, our friendly clique?  
I don't know, nor do you.  
We're too self-indulged to get a clue.  
I don't want to be the next cliché  
I just want to go the right way  
But wanting to isn't enough  
You have to work and try and it can be rough  
For the strong-willed  
And those with strong minds  
The road is bumpy,  
But you'll do fine.

# The Beat Without

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## VERONICA

We are so honored to have the voice of Veronica aka Vero in our pages of The Beat Within this week. We do not know too much about her, except what the following deep poem reveals, and it reveals so much. We were so moved by her piece "hope." It brought tears to our eyes. The beauty is that Vero found a positive in such a tragic situation. We are so honored to give her space in our pages, as we hope to hear more from her in the near future. The very cool thing is that we met her mother the other day, who appears to be very invested in helping et her daughter plugged into the community upon her parole from CYA. Veronica writes us from VYCF/CYA in Camarillo, CA.

### Hope

when i was paroled,  
it didn't cross my mind  
that i would ever enter this side of  
the fence again  
i didn't have any intentions on violating  
even though my actions said something  
different  
i maintained the first 30 days out,  
the next 60, i slipped and fell,  
and once again i was in cuffs  
while sitting in the bullpen in martinez  
county jail  
i realized i hadn't accomplished much.  
i sat there looking at my surroundings  
i couldn't help, but stare at this old lady  
who was across from me  
she sat on her seat nodding off and drooling  
her arms were scarred with track marks  
just another lost soul, another victim, of the  
dope game  
i thought about my lifestyle  
and that old dope-fiend was going to be the  
outcome  
to my future if i continued living the life  
i had chosen  
so long ago,  
but reality hit me  
and i've always felt that i ain't never really had  
nothing to lose  
and i didn't have no motivation  
i stopped myself of going further in thought  
my body was tired  
all i wanted was to get some rest  
i couldn't hardly wait for the county bus  
to come and get transferred  
to richmond's west county jail  
i was asked by the intake nurse to urinate  
in a cup  
she was sure to let me know if i didn't  
urinate,  
i wasn't getting on the bus  
she reassured me that my urine wasn't for my  
parole agent  
it was for a pregnancy test  
for the past two months my rag hadn't come,  
but i wasn't trippin'  
'cause my rag was always irregular,  
so i urinated and handed the cup to the nurse  
i was starting to feel sick  
i had started to come down off my high

i had been up eight days  
i was ready for rest  
i had been speedy gonzalez on a mission  
15 minutes passed and the nurse called me  
and she actually said  
i was pregnant  
i pinched myself  
to figure out if i was dreaming,  
but yeah, it was real  
tears rolled down my face  
and they weren't tears of anger or regret  
my tears were pure love, joy, and relief  
you might ask relief?  
yes, relief  
a door opened that had been shut for so long  
i had motivation and something to live for  
i got on the payphone and called my prima  
(female cousin)  
and told her my news  
then we three-wayed to my baby's dad  
guys seem to not show emotions  
well, my baby's dad is that type  
none of our problems ended  
i thought things would be different  
since i was going to give him his first born  
that's only in movies though  
'cause through the time i was pregnant  
he still caused me heartache and tears  
the lesson in just that part is  
that no man is going to change for a baby  
and a baby won't stop him from leaving  
it's o-k though  
in the end you seem to realize that you don't  
need no one  
to share your blessing  
sometimes people, in general, take a lot of  
stuff for granted and it eats you up when it's  
gone  
ask my baby's dad  
four days later i was back in ya  
sporting a pink shirt with pregnancy pants  
no longer the state blues  
at night, in my box, i spent long hours  
daydreaming about the lifestyle  
i wanted to offer my unborn child  
my whole world started to revolve around my  
baby  
when me and my baby's dad were on speaking  
terms,  
i let him pick out the baby's names  
for our unborn baby  
with his father instinct,

he knew i was having a girl  
even though it was hard for him to express  
his emotions, one thing we could relate to  
was that we felt we had a purpose and  
someone to live for  
one day, my dream was crushed  
it all happened all so fast and unexpected  
i was five months already halfway through  
i had felt her lil' kicks and heard her  
heartbeat,  
but due to being here i didn't have control  
of going to the hospital when i  
started spotting  
i was left on bed rest and the  
next day i was bleeding and was finally taken  
to the hospital  
it was too late that night  
i went into labor  
and january 25th, 2004 at 1:39 am  
i gave birth to a precious angel named alycia  
that was the name her daddy picked  
my daughter lived only 30 minutes  
she was very premature  
her lungs weren't even fully developed  
i cried, cried, and cried  
i held her, but i couldn't help  
but question why  
i hated everyone and envied all those who had  
their baby's  
my motivation, happiness, relief, and hope  
was taken from me,  
so quick  
and there i was  
the same ol' vero  
only time has helped me  
to regain all those feelings  
the hurt of losing my daughter will always be  
there,  
but my emptiness is filled with her spirit  
my daughter gave me a glimpse of happiness  
that she let me feel again  
and now i realize that i am capable of being  
happy  
it's just a matter of time that i will be blessed  
with alycia's brother or sister.  
this was written in honor of my daughter  
alycia who is smiling down on me and giving  
me strength day by day  
she watches over me, her grandma, and her  
family  
including her daddy.

## Hi

My name is Veronica. I'm a ward at CYA. I came across your info through my mother, she heard about The Beat Within and was interested in me sharing some of my writings with you and your program. I've always wanted to write in The Beat but I always passed up the opportunity, but not this time.

A home girl who is in here receives The Beat articles and she shares them with all of us from the Bay Area.

I really want you to know that your program of The Beat is very helpful to us isolated and feel we are the only ones going through stuff behind these walls.

After the loss of my daughter I had stopped writing poems and I was not doing anything but sleeping or fighting and causing drama. About a month ago I got back on track and started writing poetry again.

See in my poems I escape, I release all my troubles and feelings in my poems, and my hope is by me exposing my poetry to everyone in The Beat Within is for someone to get inspired and maybe be able to relate to some of the things I talk about and know that no matter what happens there's a light at the end of the tunnel and I know from experience.

I just hope everything works out and I can make it in one of The Beat Withins. Thanks.

Lastly, enclosed is my first poem that I would like to share in The Beat Within. Once again thank you for this opportunity. This poem is in honor of my daughter, Alycia Mari.



### ROGER DAVIS

Roger Davis has sent *The Beat Without* two amazing essays about the importance of talking to your children, teaching them everything you know, taking them places with you, and letting them visit their parents in prison, and another essay about the White man's system of oppression of Black people. Also, he has written an amazing poem about how profoundly lonely life is in prison when you're a child in a man's body, called, "Although I Laugh." Davis is currently incarcerated at the James Allred Unit in Iowa Park, Texas.

### The Ways Of The System

Ahhh, yes, this country has yet to learn from their past mistakes of entering other countries and manifesting devilness. But eventually their evil deeds for money, old and forced government ancy will come back, haunting the hell outta 'em. For one cannot throw dirt and expect none not to come back of them, huh? I, myself, learned from experiencing that whenever one just messes over another, just for general principals, for no justifiable reason or cause, is why another will come back on them.

For one eventually, sho-nuff, will reap what they sow... Ahhh, yes, as usual, I'm here, making plans for the future, rechecking them, knowing that every stop made from this point on has to be made to count. No more room for "ifs" or "maybes." At the same time, I've been ruminating about my Black people and our future as a whole, which really looks bland, due to mostly my people's lack of knowledge about ourselves, and history and the ways of the White man, and y'all's systems of operation, being totally mis-educated and brainwashed. In playing the same, I have to give it to the White devils. They are phony, G!

They always thinking and planning years ahead, when most of our people only plan for tomorrow, and allow their weakness for sex to lead them into action, and always going on what they've heard. OK, we're told. Forever refusing to check, to make sure of the facts, which is why they always win-lose and fall later. But our main problem is refusing to look at and study the systems, and then accept the systems for what they really are. What they were established for—to do what to whom (enslave, monopolize, etc.,) In expressing the same, my brotha, sista, the system, itself, all around the world, where the White man has ties, is made to keep all people of color down. Understand their constant control: To keep us believing, dreaming, hoping, while they, the rich whites, ruled, appropriated and contained at least 95% of the assets of production for their personal enjoyment.

The result of such a conspiracy measured in society, social, economic, educational, and religious terms, varies little from the notorious setback system they have here in the United Snakes of Amerikkka. The White minority reigns at the top in every sense of the word, in everything as we Black peoples, or people of color, around their world wallow at the bottom, with a disproportionate number of symbolic, middle-class opportunities being extended to a select few: like Jesse Jackson, house ninja. There are many others, but he's the number one Sambo, etc., selected to make things look good for the eye of the world, as one would expect around the world of Coloreds.

High-yellow Ninjas first, then Blacks. The yellow Ninjas orst for the man knows that they have some of their blood in them from somewhere down the line. It's been this way since slavery, brothas and sistas! Still is! The White man always gave them more room and freedom. That's why most brainwashed yellow Ninjas think they are more than the rest of us. They've been made to think this. Why? Yet, it's all done to keep us hopelessly divided and fighting against each other. In saying that, brothas and sistas, even though I hate to say it, I must face and accept the truth and reality for what it really is: There is no cultural support for the kind of sacrifices and motivation needed to overcome the poverty: slums and illiteracy and lethargy we suffer.

Specifically, there's no major movement of Black pride predicated on the culture of our Black people. Afrika. We Black people blindly continue to allow ourselves to be mis-educated and manipulated by corrupt political systems that co-opt our potential leaders, while leaving us, the masses, wandering in cultural confusion with only an occasional rap phrase, like "Keep The Dream Alive." OK, "Keep Hope Alive." I can't see it, Nubian Kings and Queens!

And I refuse to accept the above, huh? Martin Luther King died with that same view of having a dream. Our visions are symbolic. Shhh, all my dreams are bad ones, so forget a dream! Especially a dream to scheme, betray, mislead, mis-educate and humble my people, down for the same deaths, when they could have stood on both feet, fighting and dying as the same sanctify, for the same is all the White man knows, and they're cowards without their guns, cannons, bombs, etc. Ha ha. Shhh, I know they gonna have when I surround myself with Snow foxes, White women, etc.

But forget how my family or anybody else looks at me. Forget whoever don't accept it or like it. I gotta get and have mine! Ya blue me? Our people only look down on us for using the game, which I'm done with using the game. I'll make it, for they don't understand the fact that it's only way we can win without going through the White man, to do so with him making greater cheese, skrilla, benjies, than we would

make! Our people have been programmed to look down on us. If we do, so what? It takes to make it through the ways in which the white man has made it, but now call it a crime, not realizing the facts of the same, that those that established the systems and is controlling the state are the biggest criminals in this filthy-ass society and world. How can anyone that can think this far, not be able to see and understand the truth of the shame? We must get and have our own, and stop slaving for the devils, making them richer, for our seeds of tomorrow. To continue slaving for theirs? No, I can't see it, kings and queens. We have to stop it. If we don't, it will be even worse for our kids and grandkids. Theirs within the years to come. We are willing and ready to give, to fight and to die in ways that this system always seems to create and start. It's the same, we're witnessing here in 2003-2004, which started in from 1991, which is all for greed and power, not the terrorists nor the liberation of the people of Iraq. I state the same for we're herein the land of the so-called "free." But, yet, we're held captive by boundaries, as well by their authorities. If it's not true, then why can't we leave this witch-ass filthy state? 'Cause we're totally free, huh? So who's the real terrorist? Yea, the United Snakes of Amerikka, huh? Yeah, justified terrorism, huh? But if myself or anyone else outside the government kills, steals, kidnaps, rapes, etc., it's a crime, but they're doing it daily right now in Iraq, and it's called justified war. But I view it as murder. But, again, they'll call it "Justified Homicide," etc.

Anyways, around the world colored came from our blood line. Maybe not our enemies—the wicked, hateful White man who have raped, killed, robbed, enslaved our mothers, fathers and shhh, have us all slaving under their feet and control! All other people have and own their own, except we Black people. After we've built this place through blood, sweat, tears and many deaths, we get no pay, no land, no companies, no loans, no homes, etc. But any other races can have it all upon past history, but not Blacks. Sad shhh, huh?

Anyways, we've been erased! Why is this so erased? Because we have lost our way, because we don't know our history and what great people we are and can become with just a little love, respect, trust and unity. You see, brothas and sistas, we've been taught too much of them, none of us. Yeah, we know more about their cowardly asses than we know about our so-called dumb asses, which tells me who's the stupid snigger. Ha ha ha ha?

They couldn't master our teachings, even after we were being tricked to show them a few, like open-heart surgery, brain surgery, etc. All was being done in the Pyramids in Egypt, which is in Afrika, not a part of Afrika, huh? Again, they couldn't master our teachings, that's why they wouldn't allow them to be taught, 'cause they couldn't overstand the wisdom and supreme keenness, nor can they understand us Black peoples in light-times and never will in years to come.

Ahhh, yes. But yes. The Cave people know and realize this, that's why the White men's main objective is to keep us fighting against and killing each other and feeling that we are more than each other. They manipulate other countries to war against each other and supply them with bombs, etc. Then they kill off as many of each other as they can, where their population is small, therefore too weak to stand, like Iraq, then this system will step in to grab control, etc. They always use other people against each other, until that weak point. Then they grab at control. They wanted control over the Middle East, over the oil flow, so they've got them killing and warring against each other, but will soon step in. But, believe it or not, this country will suffer bombs under G.W. Bush's administrativeness. Bombs will be dropped here. I'm surprised that they're not already droppin', which will cause a lotta death and suffering, and so forth. Anyways, let me keep rollin' on, for the situation got me somewhat pissed off.

Ahhh, yes, in matters reflecting my freedom and keeping that family love, respect, unity, support, it's something easily done, once I've made it out, huh? For money draws all and everything toward the holder of the same, whether it be on a false or positive level, regardless of what level it may be, on their behalf. I can still teach them how to have that unity—family love and self-respect for each other. It has to start somewhere, somehow. Only that fact...

Again, before I roll out, forget the game. My mind-set is well as yours should be on bigger things than slangin' cain and gangbanging'. The message is: Keepin' my mind and y'all's minds focused and open and y'all heads up, as well as eyes open and sustaining my freedom, y'all's freedom and living on this earth to the blissfulness is the key. Fo' sho!

It's a shame my people have a falsified image of what power is; no more time for kookieism; it's show time now!

**hey always thinking and planning years ahead,  
when most of our people only plan for tomorrow**

## ROGER DAVIS (cont.)

### RAISING OUR CHILDREN

Fathers and mothers must raise their child or children, no matter what the situation nor circumstances, or the efforts. Conversation, be it written or spoken verbally, recorded and played back, with your children will help them. The true essences of the authority of the parents' words is the blissful connection of the parents and kids, which also bridge the ultimate love, respect and honor toward the fathers and mothers who participate in the children's lives. It's not the over-all relationship, but it stresses their worthiness to proclaim their fatherhoods and motherhoods!

Ah, yes. The efforts of a child or children to visit their father or mother should be the first priority. It would help the kid to learn and know more about their parents, as well as why they're in prison, as well as this the animal-like treatment and the cages that the system has built to imprison all except the illicit, which states there's no justice, there is "Just Us!"

Being responsible for a child or children means doing things with the child or children and exposing them to different activities, be it positive or negative, for the experiences with their parents turn the kids to a righteous path to take, for experiences kills curiosity, to succumb to wrong activities! So, yes, share different things with them at home to keep them from trying them with the wrong person; notice I said person, not crowds, for influence can come from a person that they may trust or envy, etc.

Expose them to different activities, such as letting them accept phone calls from their friends. Let them take a bus to visit their fathers or mothers to show you trust them, as well as let them get to know both sides of their families as much as possible!

Let them take the car and drive you around! Talk to them about sex, drugs, physical abuse, friends, and life in general—spiritual beliefs, no beliefs, etc.

Ahhh, school and its one-sided education is why I quit in the eleventh grade, for it only brought out rage, as it teaches all whole lies and half truths about Cave people and nothing about Black people and our history! Not all the history and slavery, for it's not our history. Not one of my teachers who are White, educated people, ever has the answer. That's what's so inferior about the Black people's education, language and kingness and queenness.

Anyways, if I was to look back into the 1600s, I will find that all that was said about the Black people was White lies, for even on the plantations, it shows that learning wasn't a problem at all. But the White ninjas refused to let them learn, huh?

Ah, yes, the above is true, or one to call a man or people that they've never encountered before a "nigger," then he or she or they had to have White ninjas among themselves, before they could place the title on the Nubian original peoples, for neither understand each other—different languages. Then, again, by Black

people cultivating this hand-cleaning, cooking, washing, etc., shows they were intelligent people, and that the White people back then were sorry-ass, lazy peoples, that's why right now into days time they're screaming "Affirmative Action," which is stupid for them to be doing, when they are the first who owned companies and held the top positions, so they're telling us, "OK, ninjas, we gave y'all the education y'all was crying for, but we still showing y'all it's a tactic-tool of half-assed equality. But y'all will never hold top positions at any company, which dictates modern-day slavery.

What? Is y'all still bustin' y'all asses and stacking my scrilla, and I'm still handing y'all my table scraps? Think how you receive and view at, yeah, a small pay, but he keeps a trillion dollars. Y'all better wake up with PhDs, MBAs, etc. My message in this stressing: Give to their schools and learn their trickology and cheating tactics. But once you're out of college, start your own companies and hire our brothas and sistas, ya feel me? Yeah?

Last big spit, philosophy. On the word "nigger." This is in regards to the brotha's piece in The Beat Within: Your philosophy wits some truth, but also a half lie, but nevertheless it was felt!

Ahhh, for those who don't understand the ghetto philosophy of the word "niggers," look at the different spelling for "niggas," not "niggers," which us ghetto niggas use and stress the word "niggas," as to state to the hateful German "We're that Nat Turner "niggas" that y'all don't want our people to learn about, let alone they're our people, for to know, brother Nat was fear in itself for them. Sambos, huh? So my Black brotha of the Nile: It's not wise to have all their book sense and none of your ghetto sense. So get hip! Original Ansar means "Man in the image of the Supreme Beeing , Jeah!"

Also know the highly-educated Negroes are responsible for the title placement of the Afrikan-Amerikkian Negroes on the people as a means of being equal to the Anglo-Saxon. Ha ha, which I find funny. How can we be equal when we are the original people of this earth? Cultivate them among their cave days and ways? Yes, it's a question many want answered. Huh?

Learn a parable, the myth: The myth of the strong Black womban is the other side of the coin of the myth of the beautiful, dumb blonde. The White man turned White woman into a weak-minded, weak-boded, delicate freak, a sexpot, and placed her on a pedestal. He turned that Black womban into a strong, self-reliant Amazon and deposited her in his kitchen, so that he can have her when he wants her, that's the secret of Aunt Jemima's bandanna! Work, the sista-gals and strengthen them against them men; keep the Black men jobless and broken. Aaa, I ask you to recall that before we could come up from slavery, we had to be pulled down from our thrones. Yes, kings and queens from Aike but in Afrika by one Mr. Eldridge Cleaver: The book, "Soul on Ice!"

## How can we be equal when we are the original people of this earth?

### ALTHOUGH I LAUGH

Although I laugh to keep the tears away  
Locked down twenty-three hours a day  
In a steel cage everyday  
In the so-called free USA  
They say  
In every single rain drop that falls  
It claims a different heartache  
And cry full of pain and hurt  
Of which today  
A new rain drop claimed  
This new hurt  
A hurt of which my reality  
Is manifested

I'm no stranger to pain  
I give it, I take it!  
Well, sadness monitors the child's every  
move  
A child born to feel, to look, to respect  
But is plagued with instilled inner pain

No one knows my pain  
I remain  
Silent of thou and weathered badly through  
the years  
Yet appears  
Unchanged  
God bless the child born a sinner  
Knows sin lives to sin  
Destined to die from the sins  
My shadow

The original timekeeper awaits!  
Yet a true, the man of solitary confinement  
Smiles, yet cries  
And dies  
From the infested gang  
As well as friends and family who lie  
Do you understand me?  
Probably not  
For I have knowledge beyond my thirty-two  
years  
And I'm seldom understood!

Also, I hurt, I hurt, I hurt  
All alone, all alone, all alone  
So alone  
Please help me!  
A child in a man's body  
Captive and I want to come out!  
I cry behind these eyes  
Look into the man's eyes  
And there you'll find the child  
He feels, he loves, he respects  
Also, he hurts  
Although at the present  
I'm not troubled  
Yet I continue to cry inside, today  
For I know tomorrow will bring about  
A new disaster for me  
A new pain  
A new trial  
And my tears are needed  
So also I continue  
To cry

### GELLÉ TOLBERT

Once again we welcome Gellé Tolbert to the pages of The Beat Without. This week she comes with a couple pieces, one happens to be on a recent workshop topic, "the speech." Hope you enjoy the following! Oh and by the way congratulations Gellé for recently getting off of the system's paperwork on April 27th.

## I smoked and I tripped and I drank to get the forgets.

### THE BEAUTIFUL WATER

Sitting by the water.  
Imagining myself rising out of it.  
Glistening tears of clear water dropping.  
Off of my fingertips.  
The ends of my braids.  
I am that water.  
On good days, calm but treacherous under the surface.  
Today I feel off kilter.  
So does my metaphor.  
The surface of the water is cresting.  
Boiling with the coldest of flames.  
Some people borrow the life of the bay, ocean, water to  
take their own.  
They die cold wet and above all alone.  
Five pelicans fly past.  
They imitate ducks.  
They form a V.  
Dragging hard on a Newport with a fuzzy blue and white  
pen.  
Blowing feathers in the wind.  
I laugh at the idea of me falling.  
I won't be the one out.  
The odd bitch out.  
Full moon to my left.  
My block is akin to your hood.  
My folks die daily.  
I walk down blocks.  
In different turfs.  
I see the shrines displaying pictures and candles.  
And stuffed animals.  
And you can almost hear the cries of the ones who loved  
him.  
Or her.  
Cuz women fall prey to stray or directed slugs.  
Day and night.  
But yet and still we wonder how it happened.  
Rest in peace folks.  
Don't worry about the living.  
We don't worry about each other.  
Instead we kill one another.  
Over turfs and colors.  
I'm stuck too.  
Birth brings trials.  
We die more each day.  
Dad says he's dying of cancer.  
My sign.  
But not my creation.  
He's dying.  
Who's got the will?  
No, not the paper.  
The emotion.  
Who's willing to die a little with him?  
Give his last days on Earth a little light.  
A way to rest.  
I have to lose a light in my chapel.  
Got thousands of candles.  
Lit and slowly burning to drown,  
And dwindle,  
In its own wax.  
Another thing snuffed out.  
My heart bleeds.  
Crimson cascades roil like water of the falls.  
That's what we are.  
Waves in the oceans of life.  
And I.  
I will be the duchess of my pool.  
I am the rage of unjustly dying.  
I am the water.  
I am.  
A tsunami.

### The Speech

May 3rd 2004  
Today I sat here and remembered the hardest times.  
The days of abuse that I helped put myself into.  
The fights and the way we go round and round in the boxing ring.  
My heart hurts,  
My pride hurts,  
My face hurts from the fists.  
And the slaps that caused me to reel on my feet.  
The taken away feeling when you weren't mad and how I used to love  
him.  
Remembering the hurt I was caused as a seedling.  
Young and innocent.  
A good little girl.  
Innocence taken.  
Innocence lost.  
Violated.  
Lost amongst the debris of time.  
You speak volumes about the life of a god.  
How you reign supreme and highest on the totem pole.  
But today I also remembered taking the blame for your shortcomings.  
Placing your burdens on my new shoulders.  
Young in age, old in responsibility.  
Lost in the whirlpool of this world.  
The days I was high just to feel less .  
Remember them days?  
Nah you wouldn't because you sheltered yourself from the world  
in a cloud or a sniff.  
And so did I.  
No mistakes in this world you said.  
Only the destined to meet  
do and all the rest pass each other by like strangers.  
Why me though?  
But now I know why.  
Gelle was young and he knew she was wounded in soul.  
So he tried to make her love him with her whole heart.  
Don't love was like a mantra.  
Don't love your mom, or anyone but me.  
So I did.  
Or tried because we were inseparable once upon a time.  
Now you're in my head and I can see the truths.  
The cases I went away for out number my happiest times.  
After Nairobi.  
Since the dawn of my adolescence.  
The chapters are closed for my own sanity.  
Love is forged rapidly.  
And it shatters the silence with a vengeance.  
I smoked and I tripped and I drank to get the forgets.  
But I couldn't  
there were speeches to be written and ways that I need to try to deal.  
But only in the silence.  
I love someone again and I leave it alone.  
Not to hurt but not to get hurt.  
I cry in the end.  
I lose sleep.  
I worry if he is okay.  
Stuck on the block types.  
Lost in the wind hypes.  
From robbing women for their purses to jails and cases in the halls.  
No more good lucks from the girls who share the unit I live in.  
Now it turns to orange and county colors.  
Same case years later.  
There ain't no love here unless you with a girl in the pod.  
Ya'll act hard but the walls we in are mortar and brick.  
So look at me now and tell me I failed.  
I won the war you forged.  
I took the chance to live and not be another name for you to claim.  
Can you hear me System?  
Dedicated to the system and all the people in it who thought I was  
gonna fall.  
Much love to my lawyers and judge.



## ANTWON TENNANT

We warmly welcome back the powerful poetry of Antwon Tennant, a very committed writer who drops his game from Pelican Bay State Prison. We are honored this week to showcase his talents in our pages. We hope by the time he sees his work in The Beat that he'll be inspired to share more of his thoughts with us all.

**I believe in living. I believe in birth.  
I believe in the sweat of love  
and in the fire of truth.**

### 25 Years Do Feel Like Life

A true friend is someone who is there for you when they rather be somewhere else.

Much love to The Beat Within staff members keep up the good work. I really commend you for helping our youth of today. I just had to show my gratitude to The Beat for allowing me to be apart of such a wonderful beautiful thing called The Beat Within.

To my young brothers, let this here be a wake-up call, because the majority of us don't even know you have one strike against you one-third of your life is gone. California is using juvenile adjudication as strikes. I am seeing it everyday, it happened to me, but it don't have to happen to you.

I don't have life, but 25 years do feel like life. I'm 28 now and I'll be 45 when I go home.

Y'all still have a chance. Next time you think about getting in trouble stop and imagine doing life in prison. See: People V. Smith (2003) 110 Cal. App 4th 1072.

To my young sisters you know you are too pretty and smart, deep within everyone of you lies endless potential and natural talents. You need dreams goals, commitment, ambition, a positive outlook on life, and faith in yourself, because you are our back bone without you we are unable to stand. So keep yo head up.

### I Believe

I believe in living,  
I believe in the spectrum of better days and lovin' people,  
I believe in sunshine, windmills and waterfalls tricycles and rocking chairs.

I believe that seeds grow into sprouts  
and sprouts grow into trees.

I believe in the magic of the hand  
and in the wisdom of the eyes

I believe in rain and tears, and in the blood of infinity  
I believe in life and I have seen the death parade march  
through the torso of the Earth.

Sculpting mud body in it's path.

I have seen the destruction of the daylight,  
and seen the bloodthirsty maggots  
prayed to and saluted.

I have seen the kind become the blind and the blind become  
the bind in one easy lesson.

I have walked on cut glass.

I have eaten crow and blunder bread and breathed the stench  
of difference...

I have been locked by the lawless.

Handcuffed by the haters gagged by the greedy and if I know  
anything at all

it's that a wall is just a wall and nothing more at all,  
it can be broke down.

I believe in living. I believe in birth.

I believe in the sweat of love and in the fire of truth.

I believe that a lost ship steered by tired seasick sailors  
can still be guided home to port... Everyday I live I am more  
convinced that the waste of live lies in the love we have not  
given. The power we have not used, don't wait.

The time will never be just right.

We are here to help one another along life's journey.

## DALISA THE AFRICAN QUEEN

We welcome back yet another fine writer in Dalisa The African Queen, who once wrote consistently from the heart from Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall. The following pieces come from Dalisa, who wrote us from her group home in Susanville, CA. This promising writer has the gift to do big things, we hope she truly gets the chance to

### Just A Little Thought

God, something happened to me the other night.

Something told me my mother  
was not going to make it.

I'm going sick in the head and I'm scared;  
I can't take it.

Sometimes I wonder what it would be like  
if I were dead,

but that's just the crazy, sick stuff that's going  
through my head.

I don't know what to believe, but with the miracles  
you bring, I know she won't leave.

You know that guy you don't like, I think he's  
messing with me and I don't like it.

I don't know how to push him away, so I drop to  
my knees and I pray.

My mom is suffering with  
this thing called "cancer."

God, please just give me an answer.  
She's scared and I'm scared for her.

You just can't ignore her plea for life because  
she's a wife.

### FREEDOM OR INCARCERATION

Freedom is fun, incarceration is dumb  
You never know what you got until it's gone

Nowadays we look towards alcohol and drugs,  
But in the end you end-up smashed like bugs

Being incarcerated, you lose your rights,  
But with freedom you do whatever you might

Freedom is fun, incarceration is dumb  
You never know what you get until it's gone.

### What's Up Beat?

It's me Dalisa also known as African Queen, from Santa Clara County. I just wanted to let you all know that I'm in a group home. Things are cool I guess.

For those of you that don't know me, I'm a very dedicated writer. I was born and raise in East Palo alto, although I want to say hello to all my friends in Santa Clara County.

To all of you incarcerated reading my piece, being locked up isn't easy, so stay strong and don't let the negativity get you down. I pray for all of you each night.

**NICK FLOYD** One of our favorite students/writers/teachers is back to lace us with his game of poetry, that hopefully will save a reader or two from falling further into the belly of the beast, where Nick sits tonight, facing 12 years in the California Department of Corrections. We first met Nick well over six months ago in the max unit in 150. Today he writes from the heart as he sits waiting to hear his fate, Santa Rita County Jail.

## THOUGHTS

I'm awake when I'm asleep, and asleep when I'm awake.  
I still can't believe I put my life at stake.  
Life wasn't meant to be a piece of cake.  
It's a human beings nature to make mistakes.  
I'm in a place where they can careless.  
If it wasn't for my family and God,  
I would probably want to end my life with the Smith & Wess.  
My life is a total mess.  
What must I do for the pain to stop.  
I wanna start over and make it to the top and never have to have any  
contact with cops.  
No more kickin' it with thugs that hold chops.  
My heart aches with agony and pain.  
I'm stayin' strong and keepin' my mind sane.  
I live in a nightmare.  
Ain't it strange.  
Santa Rita can cause you to go deranged.  
This place ain't nothing nice,  
so before you commit a crime, think twice and don't let the devil entice.  
You might be young and dumb,  
but don't let it get you in a place that's worse than the slums.  
Our families weap everyday, because this cell is where we must lay.  
These are learning experiences we must endure,  
so when we get out, our souls can be cleansed and pure.  
I'm just trying to save you from becoming like me:  
facing twelve horrible years in the belly of the beast,  
so once again, please open your eyes and see!  
Dedicated to all Juvenile Detention Centers,  
especially unit 3 of the 150-Crew.

## The Beat Within

I am writing you guys to tell you how thankful I am for having you help me through my journey and for helping me find a talent I didn't know I had. All of you are good people and all of you will be remembered in my prayers.

I miss all of you at The Beat Within including the Juvenile Hall staff, especially Mr Akins and Mr. Battle.

I hope the young men in unit three and all juvenile halls can come to reality and realize this place and the adult system period ain't no joke. There is no more privileges here or counselors to talk to you. Nothing is free! You must buy everything. Visiting is through a thick glass window. This place is so dirty and disgusting. I hope you all can stop at Juvenile Hall and go no further in the system.

If some of you have to go further, God please be with you. Being here ain't nothing to be proud of. This is the closest you will get to being in hell.

Thank you and God Bless.

**TOMMY BELL** Tommy Bell aka Man-Man, was formerly a prodigious writer in The Beat Within, filling our pages with dialogues depicting teen life on the streets of Oakland. He writes to us now from Susanville, where he is doing time in the penitentiary. His first piece is to his former colleague in Alameda County Juvenile Hall, Simon, who is now also doing time in the Pen' (elsewhere), but it is also an open letter to all of our readers for their edification. Man-Man holds his head high, and in these three pieces, laces those able to feel it, on some real game. That shows love!

## Love Where You Come From

You should always love where you come from,  
because it let' you know who you are  
and how hard you had to work  
to make it out the 'hood.  
People think that you live in a bad place,  
you should be ashamed of who you are.  
But if you can get through the hard times  
you have in the 'hood,  
you can get through anything!

## Be Better Than Me

I been in the game for six years now, and I'm only eighteen years old — and they got me up in the pen! I was out there selling dope and robbin' people, and it didn't get me nowhere but in jail.

Don't get me wrong. I do like the game and all the fame you get from it when you out there gettin' it how you live. But listen — I just left the [juvenile] hall seven months ago, and it was a group of us that was going to the pen'. And we all went, too!

They don't care about your life if you don't care about your own life. Don't be like me. I was young and dumb, and didn't want nobody to telling me nothing. Ask some of the staff in unit three [maximum security unit at Alameda County Juvenile Hall].

Game to game, this ain't nothing — if you not getting it now, you not going to never get it!

## Dear Simon

It been a long time since we last talked to each other, but you know I'm here when you need somebody to talk to. We was like brothers, doing hard time in unit three [maximum security unit in Alameda County Juvenile Hall].

You was down for whatever, and I was doing hella trash. I wish I would have gamed you up before I left. That was messed up how they gave you all that time!

But like I told you in the letter I sent The Beat last time — you have a chance to come home! Some people don't even have the chance you have. You still young, you only seventeen years old. Look at "Oink" and "T" — they looking at all day!

Remember how we was all in the Hall, looking at this like it was a game. Now our whole life is messed up! If you reading this piece, ask The Beat about the group of kids that was going to the Pen' in 2003. It was six of us. And every one of us can tell you — this not worth it!

We would all tell you that we wish we could do something different. We laughed about it at the time, because it hurt to sit in the cell thinking you might not never come home!

All y'all out there — think before you do something that might take your life! And Simon, man, I love you like my brother. Oink, T — keep y'all head up.

**think before you do something  
that might take your life!**

**CASPER** The following pieces are from Casper. Casper was once incarcerated in Napa County Juvenile Hall and is now writing to us from the CYA. Since the last time we've seen him, he seems to have matured and his writing is also getting stronger and better. He writes on some deep feelings in the following two pieces. We know y'all feel where he's coming from.

## Each drop represents the life I once held so dear

### *Letter To Dad*

So dad you love me, where was the love when I needed it as a kid? I did love you, but I do not know why all I got from you was a black eye and a lot of you are no good. You are going to be in jail all your life.

Now I'm in jail but it is not you who got me in here. And you are not going to be right, because I'm going to get out. But the bed you made for yourself cannot be unmade so I hope you can sleep in it.

You say that you wish that I could forgive you for the wrong you did to the family and me, but I cannot forgive you for all you did to me. I do not need you. When I needed you, you were not there. And I do not need you now.

### LOVE'S LOST BLOOD

The crimson puddle at my feet  
Is the life drained from my cold, cruel veins  
Each drop represents the life I once held so dear,  
Now it represents all I'll never hear  
I lost all feeling many, many drops ago  
The puddle grows and grows  
It is the pain I felt so long  
Now released to say so long  
In this dark stage I slowly fade  
Like my life was made,  
In a confused lust called love

**I cannot forgive you  
(dad) for all you did to  
me. I do not need you.**

**FRENCHY** One of our favorite workshop writers from Hillcrest has moved on to Camp Glenwood, but he hasn't forgotten The Beat. We are so pleased to get both his letter and his wonderfully moving poem about his mother's last visit to the Hall. No one who has read Frenchy's pieces in The Beat will be surprised by the quality of the following — and we'll all be looking forward to his next contributions.

### *Hey, What's Up Beat Within?*

This is Frenchy coming to you through writing from Camp Glenwood. To everyone who doesn't know me, my name is Manuel, also known as Frenchy. I was incarcerated at Hillcrest for about three months until they sent me here. I've been here for a couple of weeks, but I already miss my home.

I wrote a poem about my mother's tears when she came to visit me at the juvenile. I've never seen my mom cry like this. I know this is a turning point in my life. From now on, no more trouble follows me.

Well, I got to make it short 'cause I got a lot of homework to do. But to everyone incarcerated, think about your mother and how she'll feel before you do something you'll later regret.

To everyone at Hillcrest, stay up, and much love.

### **How Crime Pays: A Mother's Tears**

A blank look in the eyes can explain a million feelings  
Can leave the toughest of toughest,  
the strongest of strongest on the floor kneeling  
The only way to balance it is to have a warming hug  
Something that is more precious than a golden nug  
I remember the tomato red your face turned  
The tears began to form, that's when I was getting burned  
As you got near, I heard the sobbing getting louder  
Instantly, my soul got crushed until it was smaller than  
baby powder  
What else could I do but cry along with her  
My eyes were endlessly watery, my vision became a blur  
It was only a couple of minutes,  
but we must've cried out a river as long as the Nile  
This picture will be encrusted into my memory along with  
the rest of my memory tiles  
It's really painful to describe when you see that  
look in a mom's face  
Without thinking out our actions, is this how crime pays?

**My eyes were endlessly watery, my  
vision became a blur  
It was only a couple of minutes,  
but we must've cried out a river as long  
as the Nile**



**MARCOS** This next interesting piece, a biography, was written by our young colleague, Marcos, about the "most remarkable person he's ever met." We were lucky enough to meet Marcos through our friend, Will Corpuz, who works at the Beacon Center at James Denman Middle School. We're happy to welcome our youngest intern to the pages of The Beat Without.

## As he got older, he met people like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X and then he became pastor at Glide Memorial.

### *Pastor Fitch*

Pastor Fitch was from the South. As a kid, all he ever did was school and home. On his first time at church, he loved the music and he liked the preacher. He wanted to go to church every day. But he couldn't, so he got older and then he started his first job. He was a paperboy.

On his first day a gun was pulled on him and then he gave the burglar the money. And then he finished middle and high school and moved to Alabama for college.

When he got there, some people from the college were mean to him. They were going to jump him so he ran inside. He knocked on people's doors to ask if he could come in so the people wouldn't find him, but they said no. And then he knocked on the last door and he told them what happened and they let him in and told him to get under the bed. And then the people went to every dorm until they came to the last one; the people who were hiding him said they didn't see him.

After the people left, the other people told him to go to the very top of the building. When he got to the top, the people came back and shot up the building.

As he got older, he met people like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X and then he became pastor at Glide Memorial.

**OMAR TURCIOS** The talented Omar Turcios who was once incarcerated in Hillcrest, San Mateo County's Juvenile Hall is back in the pages of The Beat. We've seen with our own eyes that he has come a long way since his departure from the Hall. Today he is still using his writing ability to write poetry and is getting better at it as well. Furthermore, he is also working as an intern here at the office in The Beat Within, as he struggles from the sound of the following poem with what side of the fence he should stay on. He definitely knows right from wrong, yet for him and many others it is bigger than that.

**this is a straight shot to the California Department of Corrections  
You ain't trying to help nobody; we already know your true intentions**

### **Won't End**

I know I'm not in jail but I'm feeling like my mind is  
Can't take advice from people who don't even know what  
doing time is

My body is free but my soul ain't  
Having visions of blood leaking out my body like if it was  
cold paint

Death comes to all but for some of us it's coming quicker  
Give me reasons why poor people die  
and 'cause of that other people will get richer  
If you have no paint then you have no picture  
Just an outline and a shadow

'Cause my mind is a war field and my conscience is ready  
for battle

Tell me can you handle  
A lifestyle like pieces of paper that were torn  
Dead homies to mourn,  
most of us didn't ask to come into this world the day that  
we were born

It's all good, 'cause we are living life on borrowed time  
Ain't no sun up in the hood,

again tomorrow it's not gonna shine  
All the time, gotta keep an eye just like a vulture  
Ain't no life of crime  
'cause this street thang is now a culture  
I see and observe, people bleed on the curb  
Incidents that will disturb, violent actions you never heard  
And society has the nerve  
To say it don't make sense  
That's 'cause they didn't look at it closely,  
they only took a glimpse  
And I'm giving you some hints  
But not the solution to try to stop it  
Until you stop putting people behind bars  
So big corporations could make a profit  
And this is a straight shot to the  
California Department of Corrections  
You ain't trying to help nobody;  
we already know your true intentions  
Giving us no kind of chances, leaving no door open  
That's why the violence,  
in the community in the city it won't end.

**DAT NGUYEN** There are not too many stand up guys like our next writer, Dat Nguyen, who showed us great maturity and respect during his incarceration in Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall. A true leader to his peers, he left an impression on not just his peers, but to the staff and us Beat facilitators. Dat touched many lives, it's a shame he is in prison, but he gives us a real glimpse that he is today a better person and more determined than ever to succeed when his chance at freedom comes. Dat writes us from High Desert State Prison.

## Unforgettable Experience

I stepped off of the police car walking towards the entrance of Juvenile Hall. It came four hours after the cops rushed inside of my home and took me to County to book me in as an adult, but they were housing me in the Hall because I was underage. Nods and smiles as heads shook. "What can I do?" A female counselor at police admissions asked the officer. "Nothing much. He's all yours," the cop answered. "Three counts of attempted murder. A big one this time Mr. Nguyen," she said, as she flipped through my rap sheet. Too tired to answer, I shrug my shoulders with sarcasm.

It was about 4:30 am on a Thursday morning on May 11, 2004, the day after my birthday. I stood against the wall waiting for a mug shot. I had on sweats with slippers and three hats stacked on top of each other on my head that the cop picked-out of my closet. "Happy 16th birthday, Dat," the counselor said with sarcasm as she wrote down my charges, adding onto many others that I had picked-up over the years.

The officer then proceeded to un-cuff me. I took off the hats and tried to slick my hair back for the mug shot. I was too tired to pose for a tough guy look. It was blurry, like a bad dream that I wished I would wake up from. After all the police admission process, I walked to Boys Receiving (BR) another familiar process.

"What's up, Dat?" the male counselor in BR greeted me. "Man!" He sighed as he turned and looked at me after he read the charges. I shrugged my shoulders and began to strip. He gave me a bag to throw my clothes in and he handed me county-issued clothes. I walked toward the shower and closed the dirty green curtain behind me. The ice-cold water hit me like needles, but I was used to it. It was when I hit the pump on the soap bottle that gave me a wake up call. It was that same old, yellow soap that we used for everything.

As I was dialing my home number for my first phone call, I felt ashamed putting my parents in this situation once again. My dad picked up the phone and mumbled a few words. Then I hung up the phone. I sat there and started to think the whole night over: about my charges, about my homeboys, about the police kicking in my door, about the room I was sitting in, and how the Hall smelled of bad body odor and the stench of wine.

I picked up my roll, which consisted of two sheets and a blanket, and walked out of BR with the counselor who had to escort me. I was an SR-1 (Security Risk 1), which meant I could not walk out of the unit without being escorted by a counselor. I was a threat to the main population. I walked down that hall so many times before, but never so early in the morning. It was quiet; too quiet without all the movement. The counselor yelled "B8!" as we passed by control.

We entered B8, a unit that I would end up living in for the next two-plus years. Where I've lived in time after time in all but three cells, where I've had fights in almost all areas, where I've met so many good people and a few scandalous ones, where I earned my high school diploma, where I'm going to stay until I'm old enough for state prison, and where I grew up on the nonsense around me.

I came into B8 with nothing to lose. I was facing triple life for something that I did not do. When counselors advised me to calm down, I laughed. Life was getting worse by the moment, set-trippin' on everyone I met. Fights and IRs (Incident Reports) didn't phase me. I refused to let the mentality go. Nobody could tell me nothing. It all went out one ear and out the other. Back then to me, I couldn't let all the dirt I put in go away. I was there for something I didn't do, something I was down to get life for. No regrets, it's the game that we play. I didn't want to move on with my life.

My first year was spent mostly in my cell. I couldn't last with a regular program (A and B level) for more than two weeks until I picked up a fight or something to go back to C level, but mostly C-mod. I've been to isolation cell in BR so many times, I've been to it all. The PO from gang task force would come and try to scare me, but they got laughed at because I was charged as an adult. I was heading for the Pen.

Many counselors tried to help me, even when I messed up. During those years, it was Mr. Montgomery in the morning and Mr. Crockett at night. It wasn't that I couldn't get help, it was that I didn't want help. I didn't want to help myself.

I got tired of that fast, as I do with everything else. Staying in the cell watching the guys program. It wasn't that I can't stand staying in the cell, it was just boring for me. I'm an active person

and excitement wasn't in the room.

It was around shift change of 2001. They were going to reassign a whole new staff to the unit. Mr. Crockett and Mr. Montgomery was really good to me, but many other staff there had grudges against me because I fought on their shift and one of them couldn't, after many attempts, write me up and give me extra charges that I sure didn't need, so I decided maybe when the new staff members come, I would try a fresh start with them.

Right before the shift change, my homeboys got into it with the other gang. The day after the phase (riot), one of my homies tried to stab the other guy. When new staff members came in, they want to make an example (a statement). They shut the program down. After a few weeks, we programmed slowly. For the first time, something happened and I wasn't involved. Me and the other homies were out in the courtyard playing handball.

I started to act right. I started to worry about my case instead of set-trippin'. As I programmed and worried about my business and not about anyone else's, my time started to go by easy. Ms. Bishop, Mr. McKelton, Mr. Logan, Mr. Birchard, Mr. Navarro, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Reyes, and Ms. Soria all helped me out in so many different ways. It was the easiest time I've done so far.

So I waited for my fate to unfold and waited for my transfer to the state Pen. My eyes started to open. I'm glad now that I did that. When I started to program, I focused on school and I got my diploma. I got things I didn't know I could get. I didn't have to worry about watching my back, not that I don't anymore.

I realized that I was just taking the homies places that were before me. I laid on beds that many laid on before. It's just a vicious cycle that'll keep going on unless we educate our little brothers and sisters, homeboys and homegirls. The sad thing is that as soon as I left, many of you lined up to take my place, and many want to take your place, and it goes on. I call it (juvenile max unit) my home, yet it was just a unit and cells in it. Nothing lasts forever. Soon, we all got to go on with our lives.

We all got to go on with our life. There's too much to do on the streets other than gang bangin'. Trust me, even guys I've met in here with their sets tattooed on their heads told me that. If you get out soon, then good. Even if you're facing life, you have too much to worry about to be doing all that. Stand up for you and be proud of where you're from. I'm not knocking no one's 'hood, set, or side, but play it smart. You gangbang on the street earning a rep, putting in work, and taking penitentiary chances, but when you get in the Pen, there's nothing like that. They don't like that street bullshhh here. You stay with your people and treat everyone with respect or else. You represent where you are from, but watch what you say or how you say it.

We're all different, yet in so many ways we're all the same. My homies and I in the Hall were like brothers before I left. We saw each other as homies once we looked past the tattoos on each other. I was there with guys who I had fought with when we first arrived, but we ended up cellies before I left. We do so much damage to each other on the streets, we should come together to fight the system together. We don't have to become best of friends, but we need to have a mutual ground where we understand each other's program. For all we know, we can be each other's cellie in the Pen someday.

To all the homies in the Hall, especially B8 and B9, just enjoy your time. Penitentiary time or not, we have too much to do and worry about. Always remember where you come from, but don't let your pride hold you down. Listen to the wise words that come your way. Soak it in, don't shut it out. Nobody is perfect. Your mentality (way of thinking) will always stay with you. It's a part of you, but it is up to you to keep it in check and know what will be good for your future. Work on bettering yourself mentally, physically, and intellectually.

Remember if you're going home, there's too much to do out there other than taking penitentiary chances. You don't want to go to the Pen to realize it. If you're heading to the Pen, there's too much for you to worry about other than set-tripping. There's a long road ahead. Plan out what you want to do with your time. You should enjoy being at home and take advantage of it by getting your diploma or GED since you're at home. More days will become brighter once you allow yourself to shine.

I wrote this from experience. Much respect from this end.

*Just like you can become what you eat, you also can become a slave of what you think. You see, your thoughts control your actions and your actions control your destiny.*

*check out the rest of E-Money's BWO piece on page 61*